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'It tells us no more, and no less, than we should know of a gifted and vigorous personality met in daily life. In modest and lively sequence it describes the growth of varied interests and firm beliefs, of happy family relationships and of adventures all as they were converted into active expression and conduct by a vital energy and determination. Realisation of self of the best self with enjoyment, is the keynote. . . .

'The record is given with a lively directness which has both the quality and the reticences of personal talk. After reading it, as would happen after such a

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# AFTER EVEREST



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T. HOWARD SOMERVELL

# AFTER EVEREST

THE EXPERIENCES OF A MOUNTAINEER  
AND MEDICAL MISSIONARY



HODDER AND STOUGHTON  
ST. PAUL'S HOUSE, LONDON, E.C.4

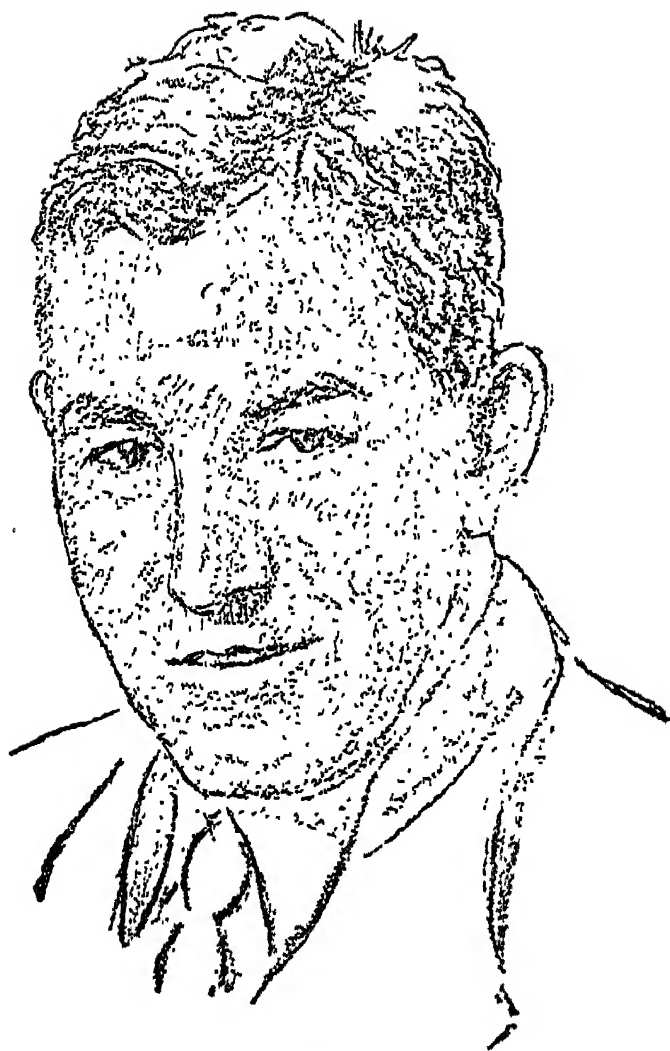
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TO  
MY WIFE  
WHO SHARES MY LIFE  
IN INDIA AND MY LOVE  
FOR THE INDIAN PEOPLE



T. H. SOMERVELL

*From the sketch by P. R. OLIVER*

## FOREWORD

NO GREATER DISTINCTION COULD HAVE BEEN CONFERRED on me than Somervell's request to write a Foreword for his book. For he is the very salt of the earth. Of all the Everest men I met I took to none more than to him. And fortunately his book is very Somervell—that is, it is human to the core.

Somervell is no mean mountaineer: he is one of five who have reached the 28,000-foot level. He is no mean painter: his picture of Everest adorns the walls of the Royal Geographical Society's House. He is no mean musician: he has transcribed Tibetan songs and played them in England. He is no mean surgeon: he served as a surgeon in the Great War. He is no mean lover of men: he has given up a lucrative practice and devoted his life to alleviating the bodily sufferings of Indians and putting new spirit into them.

Above everything he is a Christian. But he is a thorough-going English Christian, with all the gay courage of the unadulterated Englishman and all his incapacity to see anything but good in the worst. He is haunted to this day by the horrors of hospital scenes behind the Battle of the Somme; but he marked "an unselfishness, a spirit, and a comradeship" that he had never seen in peacetime. And instead of appealing to men's fears as a reason for efforts to preserve peace, his conclusion is that "the very gloriousness of the spirit of man is a call to the nations to renounce war and give love a chance to bring forth the best."

Similarly, though he was devotedly attached to Mallory and was with him on Everest just before Mallory and Irvine were lost, he did not deplore their loss as being



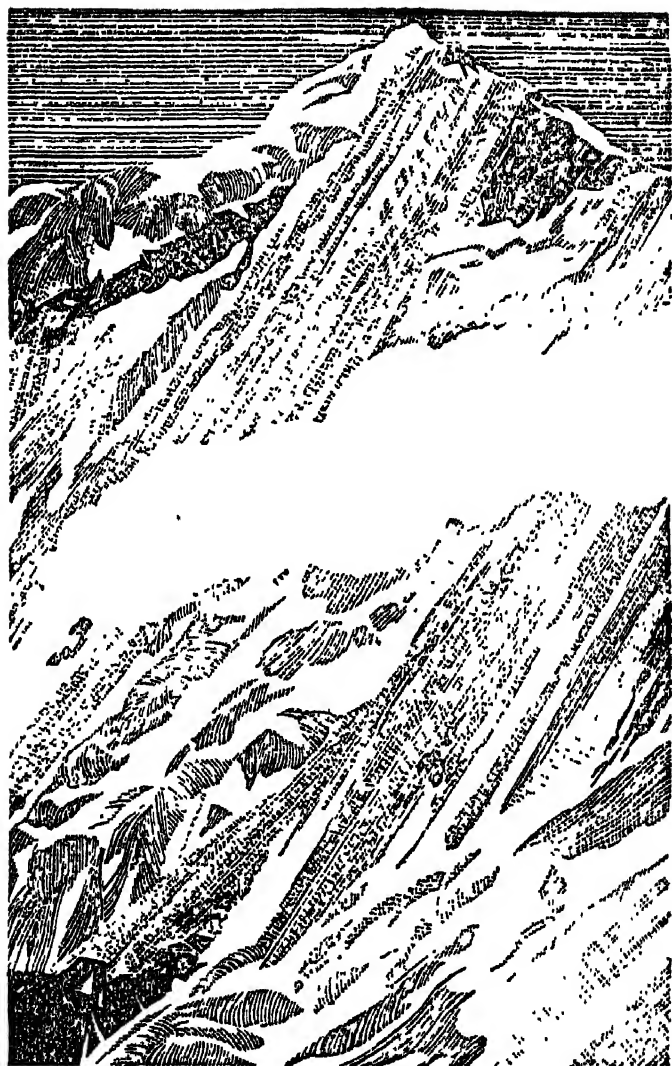
## FOREWORD

in vain. "Nobody can hold that lives lost in fighting Nature's greatest obstacles in the name of adventure and exploration are thrown away," he says. "The loss of those splendid men is part of the price that has been paid to keep alive that spirit of adventure without which life would be a poor thing and progress impossible."

And the true English spirit he puts into his work in the mission-field. "It is no part of our work as Christians to destroy Hinduism," he says, "nor to go out to India with any feeling of racial or religious superiority, but to serve India in the spirit of Christ Himself—to be servants of mankind." This is on much the same lines as the observation of Rev. A. G. Fraser at the World Congress of Faiths that the business of missionaries is not to convert but to contribute. And they may so act with all the greater confidence because of the very absorptive nature of Hinduism. Hindus most readily absorb the spirit of Jesus. They would catch it from a man like Somervell without his or their knowing it. And though he regards them as more disposed to talk than to act, that is as much a part of their nature as action is part of his. He may be sure that in time deeds will follow their words.

They will also read this book. I do not foresee that it will go down to posterity as one of the great classics of English literature. But I am perfectly certain that everyone who reads it will be wanting to climb mountains, paint pictures, make music, do all the good that it is in him to do, and, in general, enjoy life to the full like Somervell.

FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND.



The Unclimbable Southern  
Face of Everest



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## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE FIRST PART OF THIS BOOK IS A SHORT ACCOUNT OF adventures on mountains, which finally led me to India.

Having once seen the sufferings of India, the only possible reaction to them seemed to me that I should stay there and try to relieve them. I did so, in a thickly-populated corner of the country, and the second part of the book is an account of the doings of the Medical Mission with which I have been working ever since 1923. I have read a good deal about India, and it distresses me to find that books about it—at all events those which are read by the general public—are usually written either with a view to causing sensation by reporting all the vilest things in Indian life, or else taking the exactly opposite point of view—that conditions in India are ideal, and that the villain of the piece is the Westerner. Both these points of view are unfair. I have, therefore, in the last few chapters, attempted to give a short and readable survey of India as I find it and as I love it. I have tried to be fair to both sides, and my sincere hope is that the time will soon come when “sides” will no longer exist, but the best of India and the best of Britain will combine in true friendship to give India a real freedom.

T. H. S.



## CHAPTER I

### BEGINNINGS

I WAS BORN IN KENDAL, WESTMORLAND, IN 1890. BUT this event scarcely comes under the heading of reminiscence, so we will have to take it for granted. Nevertheless, I must say something about my parents, since, if there be anything good in my life and character, it is derived from them, and if there be but little that is good, it is my fault and certainly not theirs. For nobody could have had a better father and mother than I had.

My father was of old Westmorland stock, full of the better side of lowland Scots. He was of Presbyterian and Quaker ancestry, a sterling character if ever there was one, wise and thoughtful, strong and independent, brimful of humour, a hater of cant, a lover of God and of men. My mother came from the South. I believe she could hardly understand the Westmorland dialect when, after her marriage, she arrived to live at Kendal. Though my father was by inclination a Liberal, and by denomination a Nonconformist, my mother had been brought up a staunch Conservative of the old school in the Evangelical Low Church. She is the most unselfish person I have ever met, full of the best type of Christian love, given almost over-much to good works, one of those people who command universal love and respect simply by consistent unselfishness combined with charming personality.

Together, my parents stand for all that is best and most honourable and upright in British life. Often, even now, I experience the same feelings that I had when, as a child, I was convinced that my parents were perfect and sinless. The idea of Christ being uniquely sinless was



## AFTER EVEREST

instilled into me at an early age ; but it failed to impress—for were not my parents sinless ?

My sister, Joyce, is two years younger than I, and in our early childhood we were as quarrelsome as cat and dog, but excellent friends all the same. My brother was three years younger still, but I never wanted to hit him. I was rather specially, I think, a mother's son, devoted to my mother with a devotion so passionate that if she were to be away for half a day, I would count the hours, even the minutes, before she was due to start. Later, when I went to a boarding-school, I could not stand the presence of any third person during the last few days of the holidays. I must have my mother to myself, and even a casual remark by her to one of her friends, or a brief conversation in the street whilst shopping, was bitterly resented as taking her undivided attention from me for a few moments.

The serious and contemplative side of me, as well as my devotion to music, are probably the outcome of my very real intimacy with my mother, an intimacy of the secret places in my soul, possibly in large measure unknown to her who was the object of my devotion.

My father was usually at his business most of the day, but when he came home in the evenings—what could have been more glorious than the games we used to play with him ? Rowdy games they were, in which we were thrown on the floor and mauled and mercilessly tickled ; but he did it all with the gentleness which only big, strong men can show when they play with little children. And he told us the most fascinating stories—real good ones, with a plot, often full of local colour connecting them with old buildings we knew, or with the fells and dales of the beautiful country in which we lived. Sometimes these stories were continued from day to day. It was during the summer holidays that the longest and best of them was told. In fact, that was the time when we children grew to know our father. Would that I had the ability

## BEGINNINGS

to give my own children something of the delight and interest and friendliness which my father gave me.

Nearly half of my life has been spent away from England, and hardly a week has passed but I have received letters from both my parents. Yes; I owe to each of them more than I can say.

What a glorious time is childhood—the golden age—citizenship of the Kingdom of Heaven! How splendid to be simple, to want passionately, to dislike intensely, to figure out the world on a straightforward basis, to have no fear of the future! To take a simple instance, we had our glorious hour every evening in the drawing-room, where we played “houses” with the furniture. Screens and the space beneath the piano were requisitioned for the purpose. Here we set up our house and called on each other, occasionally having a *real meal* with the aid of our miniature dinner service. Then would come a dance of the primitive order—a cross between the *Sacre du Printemps* and the Mulberry Bush—while my mother played the piano. And there was the big, dark cupboard, where were kept the lamps and a few very special toys such as the Japanese House, source of endless delight, and where you could rub lumps of sugar together and make them glow.

The Noah's Ark was allowed only on Sundays, a wise provision of our God-fearing parents which was very largely instrumental in teaching us not to hate the Sabbath but to look forward to it. On Sundays, too, my father was at home, and we had dessert in the dining-room and an uproarious tea. How many times, I wonder, have I rolled in an agony of helpless laughter on the floor during Sunday tea? My father and sister were the soul of wit, and, although not able myself to produce any original or funny remarks, I am thankful to say that I was always blessed with enough sense of humour to be able to laugh as loudly as anyone else when there was something really silly. I have found all through life that the silly things are invariably the funniest.

## AFTER EVEREST

In spite of all this fun—and did ever family have more of it, or a more splendid father to keep it going?—I was, in some ways, a rather serious boy; in many respects a most annoying and rather priggish little creature. I adored Lewis Carroll, Grimm, and Shakespeare, and loathed stories of adventure or history. I was passionately fond of astronomy, and knew the sizes, speeds, and distances of the planets far better at the age of eight than I do now at the wrong side of forty. My greatest delight where books were concerned was the *Encyclopædia*; I remember giving lectures to my long-suffering family with much ceremony, which consisted of reading articles from these massive volumes on subjects which I understood imperfectly myself. But the bugbear of pedantry was wisely kept under control by my father, who poked fun at once if keenness on too great accuracy, or a precociousness unnatural to the young, showed itself at any time.

We three children all owe a very great deal to our nurse, who looked after us throughout our younger days. It was she who taught me the songs and habits of the birds, and where to find, but not to disturb, their nests. She was a true lover of nature, and it is due to her that I have always taken so much delight in Natural History.

My parents made one great mistake in my upbringing. That was to let me remain under a governess until the age of ten, and then send me straight away to a boarding-school. I was more acutely miserable during my first few terms at that school than I have ever been in any circumstances either before or since. No boy should be sent to a boarding-school without having had at least a few terms at a day-school previously. I was suddenly surrounded by other boys of ten, and had never known more than a very few boys of my own age before. I had always avoided them in order to make paper models or to immerse myself in my beloved astronomy.

Now, boys of ten can be the most pernicious little devils in their dealings with each other, as we all know. Although

## BEGINNINGS

my preparatory school—the Leas at Hoylake—was a very good one, for which I now have a sincere affection, yet I loathed and detested it for over a year, simply because of the sheer impossibility of getting my earnest, rather priggish, and extremely sensitive nature away from these little fiends. I was quite appropriately called “Rubber-face,” just as my father in similar circumstances had been known in his day as “Square-mug”—and the combination of my sensitiveness with the fact that I had never been broken in to the ways of boys gave me the most acutely painful agoraphobia.

I took every opportunity of avoiding my comrades, but such opportunities were few, and the little devils harassed me and poked fun at me (or so it seemed) simply for the fiendish delight of seeing me miserable. It wore off in the end, and, I think, had no permanent effect on my psychology—except perhaps to make me mildly unsociable on occasion. Later on, in India, it may have helped to make me prefer the society of Indians (if unspoilt by education) to that of Europeans. But whilst it lasted it was torture.

After four years I went to Rugby, where we were worked so hard that I had no time to feel terrified of other boys. My only terror was of the masters. But of that more anon.

## CHAPTER II

### MUSIC

MY MOTHER PLAYED THE PIANO VERY WELL, AND A GREAT soul like hers was bound to come out in her playing. I thank God that I was brought up from my earliest years in an atmosphere of good music played with real feeling. I wish she had continued; but the cares of a family and a pair of fractured arms have decreed otherwise.

Chopin's studies, the Waldstein Sonata, and, above all, Schumann's Humoreske and Novelettes, formed the musical environment of my youth. How often have I asked her to leave the door open whilst I was going to sleep, so that I might fall into the arms of Morpheus to the strains of Schumann!

From my boyhood I rejected all the popular songs (though they were much better then than they are nowadays—"Daisy Bell," and things from *San Toy* and the *Geisha*) as inferior to Schumann: who will say I was wrong? It may sound precocious, but precocity had nothing to do with it. It was simply that my ears had been trained to hear, and perhaps to understand a little, the great composers. I believe that any ears brought up to retire to bed with really good music would similarly respond. I can never understand people like Mozart, who write music down at an early age. From the time I reached my seventh or eighth birthday I used to compose, in my head, the most glorious music, at first abstract in quality, but later, when I had heard orchestras a few times, definitely orchestral in nature. Most of these compositions were done in bed, while waiting for sleep. I cannot remember them, and I expect large portions of them were imitations if not

## MUSIC

actual plagiarisms. But they were a great delight to me. I still compose the most magnificent music in bed. Often I dream it, remembering a good deal when I awake. I have never heard finer music in a concert-hall.

It is always orchestral, modern without being *outré*, with just the right amount of emotionalism (like Tschaikowski) and intellectualism (like Brahms). The most glorious music! But, alas! I cannot write down a note of it, nor produce any of it—except very crudely on a piano. It will never be heard, unless, of course, Mr. Dunne is right. Then we will all hear it on the wireless in a few score years or so.

I was attracted to instrumental music quite early, and my people suggested when I was seven years old that I should learn the violin. Of course, I was overjoyed. Unfortunately, I was no Kreisler, and my violin has caused more domestic misery and parental disappointment than any instrument I can think of. A violin, unless played well, is an instrument of refined torture to sensitive ears and nerves. On the other hand, even a mediocre pianist is able to give a great deal of pleasure to his or her friends. Would that I had learned the piano, for I was mediocre! So now I derive solitary pleasure from playing the violin parts of symphonies to the gramophone, and I am still unable to perform on a piano, save by ear and entirely without technique.

These humble attainments in the world of music, in spite of their inadequacy, have brought me so much pleasure that I am certain that it is very desirable for all children who find themselves attracted to music to learn to play some instrument. The present days, when gramophones, wireless, and player-pianos give us our music ready-made, are dangerous days for our nation's musical heritage. Although people develop a real love for music without any ability to play themselves, I think that this is only a second-rate love, lacking the intimacy in which all true love finds its goal.

## AFTER EVEREST

The beautiful violin-writing of Elgar and of Tschai-kowski raises one's respect and admiration for the sentimentalists; unless you play the violin, I do not see how you can possibly get that particular appreciation. Only those who have sung in Brahms' Requiem fully realize its wonderful appropriateness. Could anyone sing in Bach's B Minor Mass, and go straight out to commit a theft or to forge a cheque? But hear it on the wireless, and however much you may enjoy it, you are merely wallowing in second-rate enjoyment. You are receiving and not giving; a short way to go and you will be a thief.

Whether or not my poor violin attainments or my singing in the Rugby choir had anything to do with it, I cannot say, but, around the age of eighteen, my devotion to music rose to its height. Like many others, once music took a grip on my imagination, I preferred Beethoven to anyone else. Mozart seemed trivial, except in the Requiem; the romantics, who had been so much to me as a boy, took on Tennysonian qualities; the glories of Franck and of early Stravinski were as yet untasted; but Beethoven satisfied, and provided as much virility and variety as anyone could ask for. So keen on Beethoven was I that, whilst my family were staying at Rye in Sussex, I cycled (push, in those days) twice from Rye to London in order to feast my ears at two Friday-night Promenades. I would not do that now for Beethoven, but I might for Brahms.

How I enjoyed those concerts! If turning a switch had been sufficient to bring them to one's drawing-room, one would no doubt have enjoyed them. But when two days of a family holiday were sacrificed to two hours of music, gained only by biking 150 miles, those two hours were vitalized and intensified into a real spiritual experience. The value of that experience could never have been known had it not been for the price paid to gain it. No wonder that at the age of twenty I knew the Beethoven symphonies by heart, note perfect, I believe. Looking

## MUSIC

back on those days, I regret that I know now but few of their movements in this intimate way. What does one do nowadays? One puts a record on a turntable, winds up a motor, and out comes canned Beethoven. It is music not by any means to be despised, music of real value in life—but somehow incomparably inferior to that heard in a concert-hall entered only at the expense of hard work and sacrifice.



## CHAPTER III

### RUGBY, 1904-9

HAVING FAILED TO GET A SCHOLARSHIP AT RUGBY, I MOST unfortunately obtained the top place in the Entrance Examination. I was thus put into a higher class than my brains could cope with. The result was a succession of impositions which not only ruined my handwriting, but, of course, left me with less time in which to do my ordinary work. A vicious circle was created, whereby my work became worse and worse and the impositions more and more. The excusing by my wise house-master, W. N. Wilson, of 15,000 lines, which were at one time my over-draft, so to speak, was the only thing which kept me from running away from school. I remained at the bottom of my form in almost every subject. My first report read: "Unbusinesslike and forgetful," words which have haunted me throughout my life and have ever been an accurate description of my mental make-up in relation to its environment.

I never got on well on the Classical side, and my career was saved through the medium of an attack of scarlet fever which isolated me, in half of our house at Kendal, for six weeks or more. My mother shared my isolation, and the time I spent alone with her proved the first of the great turning-points of my life. Intimate association with so great a soul was bound to have a profound effect on my psychology. I returned to Rugby with something akin to aspiration—something, that is, higher than ambition—in my outlook. I had been busy previously. My interest in science had prompted me, during the time of isolation, to obtain chemicals and apparatus. With these,

## RUGBY, 1904-9

I spent most of my time performing experiments in the bathroom, ruthlessly sacrificing both its paint and its amenities on the altar of knowledge. Though I was unable to realize it at the time, these efforts to educate myself bore immediate fruit in a change of the deepest nature in my abilities.

Dependent for six weeks on no one but myself (for my mother was no scientist), I learned then how to learn, a thing which years of so-called education had never taught me. The upshot of it all was that, next term, I returned to Rugby a member of the officially despised "Science Specialists" class. I forged ahead at once, becoming in the course of a few terms head of the school on its science side, though a very junior prefect, for Science was put below Classics. I now really enjoyed my lessons, feeling them to be part of my life and ambitions. From that time I have never looked back.

Games were different. I tried hard, but was never good at them, never really enjoyed them until years later when Rugger became a delight as well as a source of strength. But at Rugby, the home of this best of all sports, my small size and insufficient muscle prevented me from taking my fair share in the game. I was, as a matter of fact, never very good at it. The natural result was that my popularity in house and in school was never particularly high. This was just as well, for it meant that my head was never in any danger of being turned. Years later, after leaving Cambridge, I developed the extra muscle required and a keenness for Rugger which even now makes me say that there is no finer game in life.

Games are of little value except as pastimes, unless they give you an opportunity of going hard and getting hurt. Rugger does both. I shall not send my sons to schools that play Soccer—not, at least, if I can help it. For I want them to become men.

In one respect I was a complete renegade. I firmly and conscientiously held that rules were made to be broken.

## AFTER EVEREST

St. Paul, if I understand him aright, would agree with me. The strength of sin is the law. That is to say, the law makes harmless things—such as going to a classical concert without leave, or being consistently late for lock-up—into sins. Of course, my excellent house-master and true friend, W. N. W., did not see eye to eye with me in this.

Concerts were few and far between in Rugby in those days, and, as I have already explained, I had a real passion for music. Consequently, nothing was allowed to interfere with a good concert. I used to ask permission to go. If it was granted, I went. If it was refused—I went just the same.

The return had to be made either by running the gauntlet of the private part of the house, with the awful possibility—which sometimes occurred—of W. N. W. himself opening the door and letting me in (as well as letting me have it); or a climb might be made into an unauthorized entrance. In my house at Rugby this was very difficult. But these were trifling matters where a concert was concerned. The inspiration of a Brahms quartet was quite enough to carry me through the ordeal, rendering the writing of 200 lines almost a pleasure.

Since I have reached mature years, I sometimes wonder whether masters *really* treat delinquents seriously. I don't believe they do. "Rules are rules" when schoolboys are face to face with the master. Nevertheless, I am inclined to think that "boys will be boys" is the general tone of their thoughts and of their confidences with each other. So I remain unrepentant.

Boys do get funny ideas at school. The super-humanity of their masters is in most boys an *idée fixe*. Strict, passionless, unsympathetic, hard—that is what we think them. We never seem to remember that they themselves were boys once. Many of them are boys still. "I'll write to your father about it." How that used to fill me with awe! I don't suppose that it was ever done. If it was,

## RUGBY, 1904-9

I know now what my father would think about it. But in the old schooldays it was very different. I remember very well indeed the wiles and machinations in which I indulged during the holidays in order to prevent my father and myself ever being alone together. For had he not on three occasions during the previous term been written to about it? At last, however, the dreaded time came, and I found myself alone with him, in the garden, or on the golf-links, or in the dining-room after dinner. Anxiously I awaited the turn in conversation to: "By the by, I had a letter." But I don't remember that it ever came.

If such a letter ever had come, he probably had long ago made up his mind to say nothing whatever about it. Such was respect for our elders—a droll affair, based on misunderstanding and very often on a lack of frankness and an unreasoning fear. But, like all the other things which provide us with discipline in life, it is an excellent thing. Let it remain. Woe to our land and to our generation if the modern boy should become too familiar with either his father or his masters.

My father entrusted me with money and a latchkey when I was seventeen, making me an allowance out of which I educated myself and paid all expenses except those of holidays. The object of this was that I should learn the value of money and, while young, get into the habit of not squandering it. I was expected to donate a tenth to charity and good works, and I hope I did so. My father set a supreme example in this direction. He considered all money as a trust from God, giving away ten per cent. of the first few hundred pounds of his income, any excess income above that amount being made to provide a larger and larger proportion for beneficent purposes, so that eventually about half was given away, I believe.

All this was done so unostentatiously that I personally do not know to this day exactly what proportion of his total income was "given back to God, whose it really was." All I do know is that very few of those who call them-

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selves Christians—or anything else for that matter—give away anything near the sum they might. If they did, our hospitals, orphanages, and missions would never lack, and “this week’s good cause” could close down, for it would be unnecessary to ask for subscriptions. The trouble about Christianity, as has so often been remarked, is that it has never been tried. Least of all, perhaps, has it been tried in the sphere of giving up money. I always wonder how God takes the insults which most of us offer Him in church collections and subscription lists.

## CHAPTER IV

### MOUNTAINS

I ONCE GAZED ENVIOUSLY AT SOME CLIMBERS ON PAVEY Ark in Langdale, whither I had gone for one of my solitary walks. I was between eighteen and nineteen at the time, and for years I had strolled about the Lakeland fells, enjoying them to the utmost. It is God's country, and it is best enjoyed alone.

But fell-walking, however delightful, is not adventurous enough for a youth of eighteen, and my first sight of the rock-climbers I had heard so much about struck a new chord in my heart. I followed them up, experiencing great delight in matching my strength against the difficulties of the rocks. To my joy I found that I didn't mind looking down the steep bits. When I finally arrived at the summit of the climb, I fell into conversation with the party in whose footsteps I had trodden. A short talk with them convinced me that I had done something which I ought not to have done—climbed without a companion and a rope.

I straightway bought a book about climbing—one of Abraham's—and discovered that I had done a climb which was classified as "difficult." Naturally, I felt quite pleased, and determined to do all the climbing I could, but under proper and disciplined conditions. I managed from time to time to find companions for a few climbs, and, one Easter, went with a reading-party to Blea Tarn and spent a happy week there—working in the morning and walking or climbing in the afternoon. Once, I asked my great friend, Lionel Studd—son of Sir J. E. K. Studd, late Lord Mayor of London—to spend a week with me at

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Wastdale. It was that week which laid the foundations of my climbing.

I don't know how many rock climbs we essayed during those half-dozen days, but such was our keenness on this new-found sport that we certainly polished off some six or seven "text-book" climbs each day. Then followed a meeting with members of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, and soon the joining of this club.

Among my early climbing acquaintances, those to whom I owe most are the Woodsend brothers, who actually led me on my first climb and who were friendly to me when I was a raw recruit. A little later I met Herbert Cain, who became one of my staunchest friends. He was one of the best of men, and, although his home was seventy miles away, he had a more intimate knowledge of the English Lake District than anyone I have met, including many who have lived in it all their lives. He was a real lover of mountains, as he was also of all that is best and truest and most noble.

For some years I contented myself with British mountaineering—which is surely second to none as a sport—but naturally I had yearnings for the Alps. These were increased by a visit to Switzerland in winter. I could hardly bear to ski and skate at Villars and look across the valley of the Rhône to Mont Blanc and her satellites, simply waiting to be climbed. So by means of gentle persuasion I managed to bring my people round to a family holiday in the Alps.

None of my family climbed, and I had an amusing—and very trying—time attempting to secure a partner. I was informed that there was a certain Brazilian gentleman staying at a village some ten miles distant, who wanted a climbing companion. I telephoned to him, only to find that he seemed most unwilling to conduct anyone on his first Alpine climb. So I got hold of a guide, Armand Pernet, of Diablerets, who offered to take me up the mountain of the same name for the usual fee. He was

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to call for me at five. When at seven he had not turned up, I went along to climb it by myself. I was sensible enough to know that I must turn back at any danger, real or apparent, in my then immature state of mountain knowledge.

About half-way up what seemed to me to be a very easy walk, though partly over glacier, I encountered a guided party returning from the top. "Vous êtes fou!" and similar remarks they made to me, so, after a discreet interval, I turned back homewards, returning from Diablerets richer by an ice-axe which I had bought there, but without having done my peak.

Soon afterwards we moved to the Montenvers, where the serious business really began.

The Col des Grands Montets was my first Alpine expedition, as it has been to many others. Though it is a simple climb, it affords beautiful views, and is a reasonable introduction to snow work. At Montenvers I found two other climbers—a parson called Buxton, and the Bishop of Sierra Leone—who were quite glad of a partner. With this ecclesiastical party and Jules Simond I started on my second Alpine climb—the Moïse by the north arête.

This was a different business altogether, much more to the taste of a British rock-climber. I found that the hardest passages in its rocky parts gave no more difficulty than those in some of the Cumberland climbs. At one place, where there was an overhang—the order being Simond, Buxton, myself, bishop—the bishop slipped off and dangled in mid-air like a pendulum. Fortunately I had the rope over a good belay of rock, and started to let him down to a slippery-looking bit of snow just below the overhang. The rope around his waist was loose, and he inadvisedly put up his hands to grip the rope above him.

At once the noose came off, leaving him to hang by his hands alone. Certain death was beneath him if he could not hold on. I lowered away as fast as I could, and just got him down to the snow-slope before his strength



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gave way entirely. He crossed to some rocks and there lay panting. We revived him with some brandy, and inside ten minutes he was climbing again up the overhanging rock. This time he did it without mishap—a plucky bit of work which more than atoned for his former lack of skill.

The Aiguille de l'M, Petits Charmoz, Col du Geant (with my sister, who fell into a crevasse and thereby learned the safety of a rope), and a few more minor summits completed my first season's Alpine climbing and whetted my appetite for more. The conquest of this modest assortment of peaks was no great achievement, but I had entered fairyland, and thenceforward every holiday of my life (except a few at hill-stations in India) was to be a climbing holiday, either at home among the crags of Cumberland or Skye, or farther afield among the glories of the Alps, Norway, and the Himalaya.

Moreover, I had learned the importance of holidays. To this day I believe, firmly and conscientiously, that God means man to enjoy himself. Holidays should be worked for and should be a relaxation and a rejuvenation for further toil, but they are undoubtedly of real importance in life.

## CHAPTER V

### CAMBRIDGE AND RELIGION

FROM QUITE EARLY YOUTH I HAD WISHED TO BE A SURGEON, and the question of choosing my profession never came up at all. At Cambridge, having got a science scholarship at Caius College, I began at once those studies which were more immediately connected with my profession. But more important than these were my experiences in the realm of religion.

I met at Cambridge a man who persuaded me to join the Heretics, a society with no religious predispositions, bent on investigating religious problems without bias, if such a thing be possible. We took ourselves very seriously, as is the wont of undergrads of the thoughtful type. All my cherished religious beliefs were perforce dashed to the ground, for complete open-mindedness was a necessary condition of membership of this really up-to-date society. One must be up to date—not to be that was an unpardonable sin. For two years I strenuously refused to believe in God, especially in a revealed God. But in time I discovered that there was something missing from life, something which made life, with all its interests of science, music, and fun, to seem hardly worth while.

I had nearly completed my second year at Cambridge when I met someone in the Anatomy School who said to me: "Come and have lunch." "Right-o," I agreed, and we left the dissecting-room together. "I hope you don't mind; I've got to go to the Daily Prayer-meeting first," said the other. "Will you stay outside, or would you care to come along?" Civility demanded that I should "come along," and there, in contradistinction to my friends

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of the Heretics, who seemed to be wallowing in an intellectual nowhere, I found some forty or fifty undergrads—healthy, sporting, normal human beings—praying as though they really meant it. I had considered that prayer-meetings were things which old women went to. Yet here were young men, obviously sincere, praying and expecting answers, talking to God in a business-like way, not like the parsons in church.

When it happened, I do not know, but I do know that within a few weeks my whole life was changed. I would, I told myself, live in future for God and for man's sake; I would try to put self and self's poor ambitions in a very secondary place. I became for a time a passionate evangelical. My new-found Christian friends wisely saw that if I was to start on a new life I must make a break with the old, and it was not long before I was preaching, with shaking knees and beating heart, at an open-air meeting in Cambridge market-place. Several of my late boon-companions were in the audience. I always wonder what they thought and said when they discovered that their quondam friend had "got religion, and got it bad." But this first open-air meeting was another real turning-point in my history. It did me a lot of good; it made a drastic separation from the past; but I know now that it was not the way to carry my friends with me. Instead of having any helpful influence over them, I simply passed on to another "set," and dropped them.

During the next two or three years I was an out-and-out revivalist. My theology, so recently heretical, became completely and rigidly evangelical. It included the verbal inspiration of the Bible and an idea of Atonement based on an angry and most unChristian God, together with several other beliefs which I have since felt to be of the nature of superstitions rather than spiritual truths. I am now conscious that this period of my life represented the sowing of a kind of spiritual wild oats, an alternative—and no doubt a desirable alternative—to the

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more usual sexual variety, but a natural expression of youthful energies transferred or sublimated into spiritual channels.

At this stage, however, my experiences proved to my own satisfaction that God answers prayer, and that these prayer-meetings which had been the means of turning me inside-out were not merely vain babblings, but actually did "*do things*." I discovered shortly afterwards that for years my mother had been praying that I might be converted before the age of twenty-one. This experience of mine was just two months before my twenty-first birthday. Moreover, I took the Science Tripos (Part I) that same year. After sending in the papers, I prayed hard that they might be successful in getting me a first class, promising that I would use my brains for God. This prayer may not have been strictly in accordance with the psychology of the Almighty. But at any rate it was very sincere, and continued for at least a half-hour. I afterwards discovered that my marks had failed by one from being in the first class, but that, during the actual time that I was praying so fervently, the board of examiners was (unknown to me) meeting. After long discussion, it was decided to give me the extra mark and to admit me to the first class. These two incidents were enough to satisfy me that prayer is answered, a conviction that has never been shaken in later years; rather has it been strengthened by further similar experiences.

Nobody could possibly be in touch with Miss Carmichael and the work of the Dohnavur Fellowship in South India without seeing that prayer is answered again and again, often in unmistakable and specific ways. It may often be answered by telepathy or thought-transference or some such process, but the point is that it *is* answered, providing that the conditions—clearly laid down by Jesus in His teaching—are fulfilled. I have known many people to say that they have "proved" the uselessness of prayer, simply because certain earnest and sincere requests—such as those

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for the preservation of their relatives during the War—have not been granted.

But have the conditions been observed? That prayer is often apparently unanswered, or that requests to God, however genuine and sincere, seem to leave the situation unchanged, proves nothing at all. If I ask my father for a hundred pounds and he refuse to give it to me, does that prove either that my father is non-existent or that he is incapable of responding to my petitions? By the logic of some people it is made to prove both—witness many modern books in which the writer's opinion of the Almighty succeeds only in calling attention to his or her own limitations of intelligence.

## CHAPTER VI

### WAR

A FEW MORE SEASONS OF CLIMBING IN VARIOUS PARTS OF the Alps were brought to an abrupt conclusion by the outbreak of the European War.

In August 1914 I was unqualified. I was studying at University College Hospital, within a few months of the final examinations. I had had a number of years' experience of playing at soldiers, in the O.T.C. at Rugby and Cambridge, and I was anxious to discover where lay my duty to my country. Should I join a combatant unit at once or qualify first as a doctor and enter the R.A.M.C.?

One day I bearded Sir Frederick Treves in his den at the War Office, and put my question to him. His answer was clear; I must qualify, for the need for doctors was going to be great. This I did in 1915 during the early months, attending the College of Surgeons to hear the result with my application for a commission all ready in my pocket. I was posted to the West Lancs. Casualty Clearing Station (a Territorial unit whose headquarters were at my native town of Kendal).

With them I served during the whole of the War, under Lieut.-Col. Cockill, the kindest of martinets, and one of the best officers I have ever known. Later, his health compelled retirement to England, and our brilliant surgeon, G. E. C. Simpson of Liverpool, took command of the unit and thereby left a large share of the surgery to my juvenile and inexperienced hands. But the amount of practice I obtained was so large and so intensive that before long I was ready—not merely in a foolhardy way, but really

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ready, and, in a measure, able—to tackle anything that came along.

This is not a war book—there are already too many of them. But it may be worth while to jot down two or three of the things which seemed most striking about the four years of carnage on the Western Front, in which I was playing a minor part.

My first job was at a depot for convalescents at Boulogne. The chief work of the day was, of course, the spotting of "skrimshankers" or malingerers. We got rather good at that. Major Moriarty, the commanding officer, made good use of hypnotism in the curing of stiff joints and similar disabilities, and this was the only time I have ever seen it used extensively. Since I saw its results at the time, I have felt that its use should be far more prevalent among the medical profession. I cannot conceive why it is not taught, at least to those who are psychologically suited to perform it, in the ordinary course, or as a post-graduate subject. Moriarty's skill in getting patients "under" was very considerable, but very likely many other doctors could do the same if they would only try. Why should they not be taught?

On the Somme Front our C.C.S. was first stationed at Vecquemont, between Amiens and Albert, and here we prepared a large hospital, mainly of tents, for one thousand patients, which we were told might be the extent of casualties per division on the first day of the battle projected for the beginning of July.<sup>1</sup> We awaited this fight with anxious anticipation, and after dealing with several hundred victims of our own artillery fire—which went on for four or five days before the actual attack was launched—we suspected that our resources would be a bit slender for the casualties of the coming push.

As a matter of fact, the first forty-eight hours of work after July 1st brought us nearly ten thousand wounded.

<sup>1</sup> Casualty Clearing Stations were mobilized to the extent of one per Division, though often acting as Army Troops.

Never in the whole war did we see such a terrible sight. Streams of motor-ambulances a mile long waited to be unloaded. Though many ambulance trains went out at one side of our camp, the wounded had to lie not merely in our tents and shelters and in the adjacent farm-buildings, but the whole area of the camp, a field of five or six acres, was completely covered with stretchers placed side to side, each with its suffering or dying man upon it. Orderlies went about giving drinks and food, and dressing wounds where possible. We surgeons were hard at it in the operating-theatre, a good hut, holding four tables. Occasionally, we made a brief look around to select from the thousands of patients those few fortunate ones whose life or limbs we had time to save. It was a terrible business. Even now I am haunted by the touching look of the young, bright, anxious eyes, as we passed along the rows of sufferers.

Hardly ever did any of them say a word, except to ask for water or relief from pain. I don't remember any single man in all those thousands who even suggested that we should save him and not the fellow next to him. Silently beseeching they lay, as we rapidly surveyed them to see who was most worth while saving. Abdominal cases and others requiring long operations simply had to be left to die. Saving of life by amputation, which can be done in a few minutes, or saving of limbs by the wide opening of wounds, had to be thought of first. There, all around us, lying maimed and battered and dying, was the flower of Britain's youth—a terrible sight if ever there was one, yet full of courage and unselfishness and beauty.

At the height of the carnage the Director-General, whom I knew well, came round. "Well, Somervell, my boy, how do you like this?" "Sir, I think it's the most terrible thing I have ever seen, or am likely to see." "Ah, this is war, my boy, this is war!"

Yes; it was terrible—those thousands of battered, bleeding bodies, but their courage and unselfishness were glorious.



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I am now a pacifist, in a measure, but am I right? Mere pacifism is rather materialistic; the mutilation of the soul must always be far more terrible than any mutilation of the body. It is not easy to establish a balance. I know that, again and again, when, sick of the continual casualties and the wilfulness of man that maims these poor bodies, I did see an unselfishness, a fine spirit, and a comradeship, that I have never seen in peace-time.

But in spite of all that, the very gloriousness of the spirit of man is a call to the nations to renounce war and give love a chance to bring forth the best that is in mankind, in international as well as in personal relationships.

One day I went for a short walk on the battle-field. I sat down to rest on a sandbag. Just in front of me was a lad asleep, looking very ill—sallow skin—quite still. My God, he's not breathing! He's dead! I got a real shock. I sat there for half an hour gazing at that dead boy. About eighteen, I should say. He lay on his back, not mutilated, perhaps not dead many hours. Strange that, with corpses and bits of them strewing the ground for miles around, I should be so impressed by this one dead body. But so it was. For the moment he personified this madness called War. What did it mean to him? What were diplomacy, national relationships, commercial interests, to him? Why should he be cut off before really tasting the joys and hardships and glories of life? And he was just one out of tens of thousands. Who killed him? The politicians, the High Command, the merchants and financiers, or who? Christian nations had killed him by being unChristian. That seemed to be the answer.

The delights of a frosty, fine November week at home with my parents, among my beloved mountains; the terror of air-raids on the coast of Belgium; the elation of Cambrai, the first really successful "show"; a thousand memories crowd upon me. But others have described them better than I can ever hope to do, and they must remain as memories.

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There were several things which the War did for me, and for many others besides. First, it was a fine education, showing one the good in men as well as some of the evil. It forced one into companionship, or even friendship, with people whom one would never have dreamed of choosing as friends. It showed how much good there is to be found in the worst of us, as well as how much bad in the best. Secondly, it was humbling, for it taught us that none of us was really essential, and that the show goes on just the same without us. Besides these, there were many other things I never learned at school or university, and I still look upon the War as my real educator.

Then again, war-time enlarged one's outlook. My narrow, rather legal and dogmatic religion may have lost some of its definition and force, but it gained tremendously in breadth of outlook and charity. It became much more Christian; that is to say, dogma was supplanted by the desire to love God, and narrow-mindedness by the desire to love one's neighbour as oneself.

Further, it was during the War that Sir William Rothenstein stayed for many months in our Casualty Clearing Station, and I got to know him well. We often went out sketching together, and his care in drawing accurately everything that he drew at all impressed itself on my young and rather careless mind. From him I learned to approach even the humblest objects in nature with respect, and his influence has ever since been with me, leading me to appreciate beauty to an extent I never could have reached had he not become one of my friends.

Finally, the War gave me an unrivalled introduction to surgery, such as was given to few men of my age. Also, I learned how to carry on a radiographic unit, which I did for over a year. In these two branches of medical science I obtained an amount of experience which has been of the greatest possible value in my subsequent career, especially in my work in India.

## CHAPTER VII

### CLIMBS IN BRITAIN AND ABROAD

FOR OVER FOUR YEARS I HAD DONE NO CLIMBING, WITH the exception of a few odds and ends whilst home on leave, and a few scrambles on the limestone crags around Marseilles. I was actually climbing when the Armistice occurred. My brother happened to be home from Salonika just at the right time, and with him I was returning from a few days' climbing, walking over Langdale Pikes to Dungeon Ghyll Hotel, when we noticed that the hotel flag was flying. We ran down to congratulate mine host. "Many happy returns, Mr. Fothergill! I suppose it's your birthday?" "What? Haven't you heard?" "No, what?" "Armistice! Eleven o'clock this morning." "Damn. Just when we'd got Jerry on the run. Now it'll be a stalemate sort of peace, and we'll have to make harsh terms to show them we've won, as most of them won't know whether we have or not. But if only we'd had a few weeks more, we'd have got them back to the Rhine, and showed the country people who was winner! Then we could afford to show great clemency in the peace terms and everyone would be happy. But now—I don't know what'll happen. I fear the worst. We'll have to put the screw on, and there'll be perpetual ill-feeling and distrust. Oh, damn!"

Such, roughly speaking, was our argument on the Armistice as far as I remember it. I still firmly believe that we were right.

A few months in the Army of the Rhine, chiefly noted for concerts and operas at Cologne; two years doing orthopædic surgery at Liverpool (under that dear old soul

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and truly great surgeon, Sir Robert Jones) and at Leeds ; and then, in 1920, I felt that I was forgetting too much of my "civil" surgery and must chuck this military job. I went up to London to my old hospital and became a house-surgeon to the charming intellect of Wilfred Trotter, who first taught me that man made God in his own image, a truth which everyone ought to know but which had somehow escaped me. Trotter also instilled into me a great many fundamentals of surgery which lesser men seem to ignore but which have straightened out my surgical thoughts ever since. To his clear thinking and wise, if sometimes cynical, instruction, I owe more than I can say.

I then became a house-physician, learning a lot about stomachs from my friendly fellow-northerner, Charles Bolton, and about hearts from that great cardiologist, Sir Thomas Lewis. That I have been able, I hope, to absorb and make real use of the teachings of these great men is principally due to the fact that the real foundations of my medical and surgical knowledge had been well and truly laid down by two men to whom I am eternally grateful. They were my house-physician and surgeon, "Tubby" Horton and Julian Taylor. *Salvete!* It was you who *really* taught me.

During these years I was able to get some fairly good holidays and, as may be imagined, these were spent entirely among mountains. Skye and the north-west of Scotland provided one of the most enjoyable months of my life, in company with my brother, Billy, and his three-wheeled Morgan. In Ross-shire, Skye, and Sutherland—that most beautiful of all the counties of Britain—we found peaks and precipices of varied severity. We began with Buchaille Etive in Glencoe, and a few days on the north face of Ben Nevis, and worked our way to Sutherlandshire, staying at a different place each night and making no plans save that if we saw a likely mountain we would stop and climb it. Some such arrangement is the best way to enjoy a holiday if you want to see the country, and I recommend

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it to readers. The weather smiled on us and was set fair throughout those three weeks of June.

Each year I managed to wangle enough leave to enable me to visit the Alps. I had some delightful holidays there. The first was in 1919, when the veteran Solly took in hand four youngsters—G. S. Bower, Meldrum, Beetham, and myself—and really started us on guideless climbing. That year we climbed a number of the principal peaks in the Chamonix and Valais districts, one of the most memorable ascents being that of the Chardonnet, of which we never reached the summit. But we had a great day on the mountain and learned that it is the climbing that counts, whether the top be reached or not. Without Solly, we might have gone on to gain the summit at all costs, and who can say that the costs might not have been disaster? We traversed the Grépon, Bower leading, with Solly; his undertaking this strenuous climb at a good age and when not too fit was a stout bit of work, and in every way typical of the man. Later, fortified by his tuition, we left him and his charming wife—who had been just like a mother to us—at Chamonix, and departed to the Valais to try our skill with the Matterhorn, the Rothorn, the Dent Blanche, and other famous mountains.

Our luck was in, and we found that most of the climbing on these peaks was technically easy to those trained in the Lake District; but then it was a good year for ice and snow. We have realized in later years that there were many gaps in our snow- and ice-craft. No mere rock-climber should lightly undertake big expeditions in the Alps unless led by someone who has had experience of ice and snow; though I firmly believe that any reasonably strong and sensible climber can, with practice, become capable of leading almost any standard Alpine expedition in good weather. It is when bad weather arrives that experience is put to the test.

This is not a handbook of mountaineering, and the present is not the place to impart information which has

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been done so well by better pens than mine can ever be ; but I may be pardoned for mentioning in passing that such books as G. W. Young's *Mountain Craft* and the Lonsdale Library mountaineering volume should be read, marked, learned, and *acted upon* by everyone who would fit himself for leading an Alpine climb in any but perfect weather. One may be a super-climber on the British rocks and yet totally lack that experience and judgment which alone give safety in bigger mountains.

Ice, snow, and weather can be learned only by experience, and experience is the only sound foundation of mountaineering judgment, the only real safeguard of any climbing party, however skilful the members of it may be.

In 1921, I had the most varied of all my climbing holidays. At the beginning of July, I joined Dr. McCleary and Symons at Bonneval and crossed the Colle Perduto—an awe-inspiring sight in the mist. The first few hundred feet are very steep, and as mist concealed the remainder it looked as if the steepness went on for ever. However, it did not ; we were soon enjoying one of the longest glissades in the Alps, and in the evening we arrived at Ceresole. Next day, a fearsome ride in a dilapidated car, down hairpin bends, and often within three inches of the edge, brought us to Ronco. From here we made—by mistake!—the first ascent of the south ridge of the Punta Rosa dei Banchi—quite a good rock climb, far preferable to the ordinary south-eastern ridge up which we had intended to go.

Later on, after climbing the Grivola, the Herbetet, and the Gran Paradiso, we were lucky enough to find another virgin peak—or, at least, a new way up a peak which had never been climbed before from the south. The Cresta Gastaldi, next mountain to the Gran Paradiso, provided this ascent, and we started off in high spirits on a lovely day to force our way up the somewhat precipitous rocks of its southern face. At one point was a slab of evident severity, presenting a small crack at its left-hand side and

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a vertical corner on its right. I chose the latter, and went up as far as a step where extreme caution was essential in the matter of balance. I came down, as my rucksack, like that of the hero of *Pilgrim's Progress*, must be removed before the Hill Difficulty be surmounted. I tried again, didn't like it, and came down. But the prince in the fairy tales has never been known to fail at his third shot, so I had another try. The problem was, after climbing for 20 or 25 feet of steep slab, to preserve enough strength in one's fingers to allow of one's weight to hang a good deal outwards while a knee was placed on a small shelf at an awkward height to the right. By rushing the whole slab in order to save one's strength, the difficulty was surmounted. The others climbed up by the crack on the left, which seemed to go all right. Above this slab the subsidiary arête was easier going, and in a short time the snowy slope at the top was attained. Steps were soon kicked in this, and the summit was reached about four and a half hours from the start. Soon after this, we went on to Courmayeur, and after disporting ourselves on the Géant we did a traverse of Mont Blanc by the Rock Route—a most glorious climb, straightforward and devoid of real difficulty.

The Grépon follow'd, and then I left the McCleary party with whom I had had such a delightful month's holiday, and rushed off to join Roberts and Beetham at Saas Fée. One day we went to the Britannia Hut, climbed the Allalin-horn, and on the following day traversed the Rimpfischhorn by the north ridge—a very fine climb, and, as far as the big gendarme is concerned, a very hard one. We managed to climb down it without abseiling,<sup>1</sup> but I remember thinking it was harder than anything on the Grépon. We then

<sup>1</sup> "Abseil" is a climbing term used for the process of letting one's self down a steep piece of mountain or rock using the rope as one's support. It is often done by mountaineers in the process of climbing down from a steep mountain as it is much quicker than climbing all the way with hands and feet.

## CLIMBS IN BRITAIN AND ABROAD

crossed back into the Saas valley by traversing the Dom and Taschhorn, just getting into Saas, after a terrific struggle with the crevassed glacier above the Langenfluh, before nightfall.

We found at Saas that the local guides had informed everyone that some amateurs had gone to the Britannia Hut, and were still there, as they found they couldn't get back without guides, much less do any climbing. So our accounts, albeit modest, I hope, of our four days' wanderings were received with about as much credulity as usually attaches to the conversation at a golf-club tea, or at dinner at a Scotch fishing centre. Our last climb was a traverse of the Weissmies and Portjengrat from north to south.

The traverse of the Monte Rosa from Macuguaga would, we thought, make a fitting finish to such a fine holiday. But unfortunately two other powers thought otherwise. The Italian Government, as represented by an illiterate gendarme who could not make head nor tail of our passports, prevented us from crossing into Italy, and even if we had got across the pass, the weather would not have allowed the climb, for it broke up and sent us all home. We could not complain, as we had had a first-class holiday, and had done nearly thirty peaks in four different districts of the Alps in almost uninterruptedly glorious weather. What more can any climber wish for than a holiday like that?



## CHAPTER VIII

### TRAVELLING TO EVEREST, 1922

EVERYONE WHO IS KEEN ON MOUNTAINS, AND ESPECIALLY he who has felt the fascination of them and has been lured to pit his strength and his skill against their difficulties and dangers, must have been thrilled at the thought—which only materialized late in 1920—that at last the world's highest summit was going to be attempted. And by no means the least thrilled was myself, for I had not only spent most of my holiday time in climbing mountains, but I was told, too, that there were not many young men who had had much mountaineering experience, and that I had at least a chance of being selected to go on the expedition which was then being planned for 1921.

As a matter of fact, I was not chosen, though I believe I was in the running; but I resolved to do all I could during 1921 to gain mountaineering experience of various kinds, and to qualify myself to some extent, if possible, for subsequent expeditions, if any should occur. I must confess to an altogether selfish and unsporting, if perfectly natural, delight in ascertaining that the expedition of 1921 made no attempt actually to ascend the mountain; and the reader must be left to imagine the transports of joy which overwhelmed me when I was asked to join the expedition of 1922, which, it was hoped, would actually get to the top.

The winter of 1921-2 was occupied very largely with preparing, in one way and another, for the climbing of Everest. The question as to whether oxygen should be carried was discussed at length, and I as a physiologist could not help feeling—in conjunction with many physio-

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logists much more experienced and distinguished than myself—that it was extremely doubtful whether human beings could live and move upwards at a height of anything much above 23,000 feet, the highest point attained by any mountaineer up to that time.

It was known by experiments in evacuated chambers that it was possible to *exist* at a height equivalent to that of Everest, but whether man could move himself against gravity by his own energies at that height was a matter for speculation; the safest thing to do seemed to be to take oxygen, and my friend P. J. Unna and I had several discussions about the form the apparatus was to take. G. I. Finch, then teaching chemistry at the Royal College of Science, was associated with the British Oxygen Company in the actual lay-out of the apparatus, and later, with its aid, went to a greater height (with Capt. Geoffrey Bruce) than man had ever been before 1922.

The apparatus weighed over 30 lb., and could not be cut down to less than this, either in 1922 or two years later. But we all hoped that the additional power given by the oxygen it supplied would more than counterbalance the awkwardness of so heavy a load, and would make up for the actual extra work expended in raising it along with our own body-weight. Anyway, we decided to take it with us. The experience of the 1921 expedition, and of other Himalayan and Polar explorers, was as far as possible pooled with regard to many items of equipment, and the claims of a few thick clothes as against many thicknesses of thin ones were discussed again and again, no definite conclusion being reached. Personally, I was for many thin ones, and have retained my preference after half a dozen expeditions to the Himalaya; but there are still some who prefer eiderdown suits and the like to a multiplicity of Shetland cardigans and a thin windproof overall. With regard to footwear, I was always convinced that at least four pairs of thickish socks should be worn for extremes of cold, and I think my boots were the largest in

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the expedition. They were certainly clumsy, though by no means heavy; but I can at any rate say with truth that although I am one who often suffers in ordinary life from cold feet, and sometimes from chilblains, I have never yet had frostbite in any of my ten toes.

At last, in February, 1922, all was ready, and with a thrill of anticipation we embarked in the old P. & O. ship *Caledonia* for Bombay. On the way out, I dashed up to the top of the mountain at Aden, and just arrived down in time to catch the boat before it went out. Skipping, medicine-ball, and tennis did their best to keep us fit on the voyage, and at last we arrived at Bombay—a beautiful harbour, but what an ugly town! Good heavens! I thought, if the real Taj Mahal is anything like the Taj Mahal Hotel, I'm off Indian architecture for good. And surely Victoria Station *must* have been built in 1851. I have ever since felt, though I have seen it many times, that Bombay is one of the eyesores of the world; the ugliness of West and East combine to spoil a lovely harbour.

But we were not long in Bombay. The fastest but dustiest train in India soon brought us to Calcutta, and in a day or two we found ourselves going up the romantic railroad to Darjeeling, which gets up to 6,000 feet without using cog-wheels. General Bruce was awaiting us, having collected most of the coolies required—and a fine-looking lot of toughs they were, small of stature but broad of shoulder and beam—and in grin too, for Bruce knew just how to laugh and joke with them, and get the very best out of them. It is a surprising thing that so few people realize that the best work is done by the cheerful worker, whether it be carrying loads in the Himalayas, plucking tea in Ceylon, or working a machine in a factory in Britain. But General Bruce knew it, and cracked jokes with the men, and pulled their legs, and altogether treated them in a way which would shock the old-fashioned upholder of "British prestige," that awful, soul-destroying bugbear that has done so much to ruin friendly relations between

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East and West. Alas, some Europeans are still such fools as to think that you cannot be a friend and a boss at the same time. Yet I believe that men like Bruce, who love their men and are in turn loved by them, are just the ones who *do* maintain the real prestige. It is only good comradeship and friendly feeling which can bind the Indian and the Britisher into one family.

We were seen off on our trek across Sikkim and Tibet by poor Heron, who was the geologist with the 1921 expedition. In pursuit of his researches, he was wont to remove small bits of rock with his hammer; but the Tibetans unfortunately believe that in so doing he let out devils. The fact that an epidemic started in Tibet in 1921 was put down quite definitely to Heron and his hammer and chisel, and he was stringently forbidden to enter Tibet in 1922. So he had to be content to come up to Kalimpong and wish us God-speed from there.

Of course, the Tibetans are right in this as in many other of their beliefs. Although the connection between the chipping of rocks and an epidemic of scarlet fever may be obscure to modern bacteriologists, yet one cannot help feeling that if man had never chipped bits off rocks—never done any mining for gold or coal, never buried his soul in the shaft of a pit—the world would certainly have been very different . . . and is it likely that it would have been even worse? The Tibetans say no; and who dare say that they are wrong?

Those of us who had never been East of Suez before were fascinated by the life of the streets and market-place of Darjeeling. A varied population, immigrants permanent and temporary from Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Tibet, and many parts of India, barter their wares, push rickshaws, about the hilly streets, and keep little, ramshackle shops. Near by, the drone of lamas at their worship can be heard, and at times a dance can be seen, full of good-humoured pathos and picturesque attitude, accompanied by melody and wondrously syncopated rhythm. The women in these

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parts are more free-and-easy than some of their Indian sisters, and walk about the bazaars resplendent with barbarously heavy jewellery; and little children, gloriously dirty and picturesquely ragged, in the streets and on the slopes play much the same games as do their cousins in the streets of British towns.

Hard by the squalid fascination of the market-place are large hotels full of European and American tourists, and the residence of the Governor of Bengal (at that time Lord Lytton), whose family entertained us most delightfully and made us feel really at home in a strange land.

After a few weeks of preparation we set off through the wonderful forest country of Sikhim, a large cavalcade with some 400 loads of equipment and food, carried partly on the backs of mules and donkeys, partly by the cheery hill-folk, whose women carry heavier loads than do the men—in fact, we were told of a woman who carried, single-handed, an upright piano from the Tista valley up to Kalimpong, a height of 5,000 feet, and arrived fresh at the top!

Our first day's journey brought us to Kalimpong, where Dr. Graham and his family entertained us, and where the boys of his orphanage (an excellent institution, where sound Christian training and teaching are given to the Eurasian children whose origin is the result of the injudicious and imperfectly controlled affection of European traders and others for the womenkind of India) gave us a rousing send-off the next day.

Sikhim, with its continual mists and heavy rainfall, is one of the most fertile countries in the world. Something grows on every square foot of ground, and the jungle is so thick below the immense and stately trees as to be well-nigh impenetrable. But the old trade routes from India to Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, traverse the steep gorges and mountain passes of Sikhim, and are kept up as well-engineered and well-paved pony tracks, and it was over these that our way led for the first week of the expedition.

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Every 10 miles or so there is a bungalow where good shelter and a roaring wood fire can be obtained ; and many happy times have I spent, on this and other expeditions, in these dak-bungalows.

Getting higher day by day, we pass first through the tall forest trees with dense undergrowth below them, and verdant, fertile clearings where the villagers grow their crops. In a day or two the trees are smaller, the jungle less thick, and the clearings less productive. By the fifth day from Darjeeling, the only trees are pines and rhododendrons, and even they are so exposed to the weather that many have been struck by lightning and killed from exposure. On the sixth day we cross the Jelep La pass, 17,000 feet high, where there are no trees at all, and only dwarf juniper and rhododendron bushes, the pass itself being usually under snow until April.

We descended into a deep valley where slushy snow lay beneath the pines, then went gradually up the grassy, open valley of Chumbi until we suddenly came out on a good-sized town, with a friendly-looking Union Jack flying from the house of the Trade Agent of Yatung. Here we spent several days going through stores, and preparing for a very long march up the desolate vale to Phari Dzong. The treeless, almost plantless scenery was relieved by magnificent views—when the top of the valley was reached—of Chomal-Hari, one of the most shapely of all peaks. Among other incidents on the march to Phari was an immense frozen waterfall, in its way one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen.

Phari is a quaint, dirty, walled town, much more pleasant in winter when the muck in the streets is frozen hard so that you can walk on top of it, than in summer when the said mixture is a slimy mire about 3 feet deep. On our return to Phari in summer, we found it better to walk on top of the walls than in between them.

On one occasion I was called to see a patient in Phari ; a rich young lady had broken her arm. The house was a

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strange mixture of sumptuousness and neglect; priceless objects of Chinese and Tibetan art jostled with dirty hessian and cracked plaster; but some of the rooms, notably the private temple, were very beautifully kept. Three priests were supporting my surgical efforts by their incantations, the strangest mixture of reverence and slyness shining in their beady eyes.

I approached my patient. Her ladyship was clad in silk brocade, her broken arm wrapped in a brown, treacly mess. I was informed that this was bear's bile, a cast-iron proof against devils. On removing it, I found beneath, beautifully applied by the local medicine-man, a splint on the principle invented by Gooch a few decades ago in Europe, but used probably for many centuries in Tibet. This curious mixture of periods set aside, the fracture was dealt with in accordance with modern surgical practice, and efficiently splinted—but hardly more efficiently than it had been before. A generous presentation of two carpets and a fine fox-skin ensued, after which the élite of Phari saw me courteously through their magnificent gateway into the filthy street.

Here, tripping over the carcasses of goats and horses, and dodging broken pots and heaps of manure, I finally reached the bungalow half a mile outside the town where the Expedition was encamped, busy with the changing of the transport animals. The mules that had carried our many tons of equipment across the Sikkim passes could not face the rigours of Tibetan heights, where no fodder grows. So our many boxes and tents had to go on the backs of yaks, and the engaging of these trusty and slow burden-bearers was not done in a moment. For hours General Bruce and others were arguing with the local officials, with polite suspicion on both sides. It was a scene, repeated several times at other places, which combined the inconsistencies of Gilbertian farce with the remorseless length of a Wagnerian opera; the whole dressed as the ballet in *Prince Igor*. The *dénouement* consisted invariably in

## TRAVELLING TO EVEREST, 1922

the bestowal on the local authorities of Homburg hats from London, while they in turn invested our party with khaddar scarves. Thus all were happy, and we parted on each occasion the best of friends.

Travelling in Tibet is unlike most other travelling. The weather is nearly always fine and sunny, but miserably cold, with a strong west wind continually blowing little dust-devils over the sandy plain. There is "no tree, nor leaf of green," hardly any flowers, and no visible grass. The yaks manage to find sustenance somehow, grunting and grazing as they go their steady two miles an hour. But the country is almost all beautiful. The limestone and granite crags with rolling sandy slopes exhibit a variety of colour—greys, reds, yellows, and even greens, unhelped by any vegetation: it has to be seen to be believed. All the time we travelled to the west we had upon our left-hand the great Himalayan chain with its blue shadows and white caps of eternal snow, its ever-changing outlines and its foregrounds of nomad encampments or well-built villages and temples.

Often we had to go over twenty miles from one camping-ground to the next where water was available. Several times we climbed over 17,000-foot passes on well-worn yak-tracks which on the plains were as smooth as a road. In all the months of travel in 1922 and 1924 I never once saw a wheel, and I doubt if there is one in Tibet, except the prayer-wheels which provide the country with one of its chief industries. Like the famous village where they live by taking in each other's washing, and like the South Indians who live on one another's law cases, the Tibetan lives apparently by twisting prayer-wheels and waving bits of white cloth inscribed with prayers.

Some prayer-wheels are as large as the boiler of a locomotive. Others are held in the hand, whilst some are propelled by the arms of the faithful, and yet others moved by water-power. In Shekar Dzong are some colossal ones which one can just turn by pushing with all one's force.



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Shekar Dzong was one of the many temples where the lamas received us and entertained us to tea (daintily served in cups with lids, mixed with salt and bad butter, the latter often several years old). The interiors of these temples are very quaint and often very impressive. A maze of living-rooms surrounds a courtyard, in the centre of which is a large, dark hall, probably leading to several others, the innermost one containing a colossal image of Buddha, flanked with various departed lamas or bodhisattvas, often of fine workmanship overlaid with gold. Rancid butter burns in myriads of little lamps. Fantastically-arranged offerings decorate the altars like a bizarre harvest thanksgiving service, and priests accompany the scene with a droning of ritual mantras or the rhythmic beat of drum and cymbal. All is immersed in the same smell of stale butter and unwashed humanity.

There is something tragic about the childish faith of the lamas, and still more tragic is the touching trust which the Tibetans have in some of the more unscrupulous ones. Priesthood is the same the world over. A real faith in a god, however mistakenly conceived, has always something noble in it. But there are few things more abominable than the exploitation of the faith of the masses by priests who hold them in a condition of spiritual blackmail. We saw both kinds of priests in Tibet. The head of the Rongbuk Monastery at the foot of Everest was one of the better sort, a fine man and a born leader. Others were too often among the more crafty and vicious, though I never saw priests in Tibet who appeared to be one-hundredth part so steeped in vice and iniquity as some of the priests of Benares, the Holy City of Hinduism.

Some Tibetan monasteries are marvels of architecture and carpentry. Many of their decorations and banners are of real beauty and purity of line and colour. The Tibetans are not by any means uncivilized, although quite un-Westernized. Both in the towns they live in, and in the organization of their state, they have a very definite,

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though characteristically Oriental civilization. Several of their ideas of justice are amusingly crude. Among them is the cutting off of a thief's hand. In one village we heard of a long-drawn-out inquiry, the purpose of which was to discover whether a criminal had committed robbery with his right hand or his left, in order that the correct one might be removed. We had some goods stolen one day, and the local Dzongpen (mayor) found the thief's brother but not the thief himself. The poor brother was bastinadoed, and upon our exclaiming that this seemed rather rough justice, it was pointed out that the brother would see to it that the real culprit did not go unpunished, so that the beating would be rightly administered in the end. In comparison with the corrupt justice dispensed in many Indian villages, where the poorest man invariably gets the worst of it, this Tibetan system seems to have a healthy side to its crudity.

One other amusing feature of Tibetan public life is the way in which prominent officials keep "doubles," or, in the case of the truly great, several impersonators. If the eminent man gets into a scrape or becomes involved in political trouble whose seriousness demands a disappearance as expedient, several wild-goose chases can be started immediately, for the "doubles" will scatter in different directions and go to ground if possible. The original will, with luck, escape.<sup>1</sup>

As for our journey from this point, it has been described in detail in other books. But I must relate one more incident, characteristic of the East, where cruelty to animals is not recognized as such, though the taking of animal life is frequently considered a serious crime. One of our overloaded donkeys collapsed while descending a pass near Shekar Dzong. Its driver, in true Oriental fashion, tried to pull it up by the tail, causing the poor moke a certain

<sup>1</sup> For an outline of Tibetan culture, see Ch. XIV of *The Assault on Everest*, 1922, and an article in the *Musical Times* for February 1st, 1923, both by the present writer.

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amount of pain. I have always been particularly moved to indignation by cruelty to all sentient beings, and waxed very wroth with the driver, whom I regret to say I knocked down. He apologized humbly for not pulling the tail harder and more efficiently ; the only explanation of my anger that occurred to him !

## CHAPTER IX

### FIRST ATTEMPT ON MOUNT EVEREST

AT LENGTH, AFTER A MONTH'S JOURNEYING, SOMETIMES ON a pony, but for the most part on one's feet—for we had to arrive in a fit and muscular condition—we reached the foot of the valley which descends from the north side of Everest itself. Here, at the Rongbuk Monastery, the head lama blessed our Nepalese and Bhotia porters, and we set off in good spirits to make a camp some 16 miles from the mountain. For this we chose an ideal site, a small, flat, grassy meadow—the only one among miles of bare stones, rocky slopes, and glaciers—fortunately close to the place where ended the possibility of taking animals to carry our loads. A good spring of water made us independent of the glacier stream which was frozen over every night until the warmer weather set in.

In this delightful spot we set up our Base Camp and dumped all our goods. Beyond this point all carrying had to be done by men. Strutt, Longstaff, Norton, and Morshead spent several days choosing sites for higher camps, whilst the rest of us unpacked and checked the stores.

So far, the thing which struck most of us who were strangers to these parts was the extreme clarity of the atmosphere. Mountains 30 miles distant were just as clear as those not more than a mile or so away. Everest from the Base Camp—a continual delight to the eye by reason of its changing shadow and cloud effects—though 16 miles off, seemed to be almost impending. Some of us felt that it was not a beautiful mountain. Its outline is stately rather than fantastic, and its dignity is the solid dignity of Egyptian buildings rather than the dome-like

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grandeur of some of the Kangchenjanga's satellites. Everest is, on its northern aspect, rather a cubist mountain, and to one who, like myself, is of modern tendency in artistic appreciation, it offered constant satisfaction as a subject for numerous sketches. I did some six oil-paintings and over ten water-colour drawings of this view of Everest, and never tired of its pylon-like stateliness.<sup>1</sup>

The more decorative mountains below it, Ling-Tren with its furrowed slopes of snow, Pumo-ri with its white cupola and incredibly steep precipices, Gyachung-kang with its colossal overhang, may be more striking than Everest in purely individual features; but Everest, so obviously higher than any of its fellows, overtops them with a dignified repose, majestic but not sensational, fitting to the highest peak in the world.

After a few days, the pathfinders returned, and the work of setting up the camps began. The limited amount of time at our disposal made it essential that this should be done quickly. We had only five or six weeks before the monsoon would almost certainly put a stop to our climbing for that year. Three camps, capable of housing some thirty people at least, had to be established between the Base Camp and the foot of Everest itself, which rises from the foot of the West Rongbuk glacier at a height of about 21,000 feet. I will not describe in any detail here the topographical and other details which can be found in the books of the Everest Expeditions and Sir Francis Younghusband's excellent summary *The Epic of Everest*.

My chief recollections of this part of the expedition are of our Sherpa porters. They showed themselves superior to the Tibetans, who were frightened to set foot on the ice of the glacier, and who, though very useful as far as No. 1 Camp, did very little work above that level. The Sherpas, on the other hand, were indefatigable, and did extraordinarily little grousing. The Gurkha N.C.O.s who led them smiled so continuously that their demeanour kept

<sup>1</sup> "Pylon-like" = Theban, not electric-gridian.

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both ourselves and the porters in good humour. The general atmosphere was one of good temper and smooth working.

I remember no great cold during this time. In fact, I even recall having a bath and basking in the sun afterwards, though, of course, it was very cold by night. But our warm eiderdown sleeping-bags were almost impervious to cold. Even when the thermometer was below zero (as it often was at No. 3 Camp) we managed to keep quite comfortable in bed.

I usually shared a tent with Mallory, in whom I felt that I had found a kindred spirit. Sometimes we played card games for two, such as picquet, but more often we read selections from the *Spirit of Man*, by Robert Bridges, or bits of modern poetry, each reading aloud to the other passages of which we were particularly fond. We discussed climbs in the Alps and planned expeditions for the future. We made, among other things, a detailed plan for the first complete ascent of the Péteret ridge of Mont Blanc. Alas! the sad accident of 1924 put a stop to all the plans that Mallory and I had made of conquests of the Alps.

But during this and the subsequent Everest Expeditions, George Mallory was the man whom I always felt that I knew the best, and I have seldom had a better or more intimate friend. When one shares a tent for days on end throughout the better part of six months with a man, one gets an insight into his character such as is vouchsafed to few other men. These many days of companionship with a man whose outlook on life was lofty and choice, human and loving, and in a measure divine, still remain for me a priceless memory. I forget the details of George Mallory's views on most of the many subjects we discussed, but in general he took always the big and liberal view. He was really concerned with social evils, and recognized that they could only be satisfactorily solved by the changing and ennobling of individual character. He hated anything that savoured of hypocrisy or humbug, but cherished all that is

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really good and sound. His was a great soul, and I pray that some of its greatness may live on in the souls of his friends.

Once the first three camps were established, it fell to my lot to spend most of my time at No. 3 Camp, which was in a place at the foot of the North Col where the glacier was fairly flat, and provided good ground for going on solitary walking expeditions to the smaller neighbouring peaks. I used often to do this if there were no duties to be carried out in the shape of making the way up the North Col, or conducting parties up the steep and wearisome ice and snow that led thither.

These walks gave one a good knowledge of the topography, and occasional magnificent views of the splendid and relentless southern face of Everest. This is one of the most tremendous mountain-faces I have ever seen, comparing with the northern face of Nanda Devi and the southern precipice of Nanga Parbat. Although during this and the next expedition I made a number of walks to the col<sup>1</sup> which leads over to the Kangshung glacier and the peak on its eastern side, only once did I see the south-east side of Everest free from cloud. Whatever may be the route by which the world's highest mountain is eventually scaled, I am certain that it will not be by these south-east cliffs of grooved ice and pounding avalanche. A more terrible and remorseless mountain-side it would be hard to imagine. It extends in vertical height for more than 10,000 feet, and is one of the finest sights in the world, altogether more impressive than anything on the northern side which engaged our attention as climbers simply because it had no such formidable appearance and provided—still provides—a hopeful and possible way to the summit.

At length, the camp on the North Col at 23,000 feet was established. There were four tents, each capable of holding two people, and a few porters' tents besides. In fact, it was a quite considerable encampment. But we

<sup>1</sup> Rapiu La.

## FIRST ATTEMPT ON MOUNT EVEREST

had already taken a long time. The North Col was not hospitable enough, and not sufficiently equipped, to permit of any attempts on the climbing of the mountain until May 20th.

Life at No. 3 Camp had become irksome. Mallory and I had made two expeditions with carrying parties to the North Col, including the actual blazing of the trail thither. Of this last, my chief recollection is of pounding through deep snow, taking turns with Mallory to go first and do the donkey-work. While on this job I remember breathlessness, fatigue, and a longing that my demeanour should not betray my feelings—to an extent to which I have never felt it before or since, not even whilst actually climbing Everest itself.

We were at first insufficiently acclimatized, but a few rather wearisome days, of lying in the tent awaiting the next meal, or going short walks and ski-runs on the glacier, soon put this right. We were really pretty fit when we started in earnest to do the actual climbing, exactly one week after we had felt so breathless on the way up to the North Col.

We had decided, on the advice of Strutt, that Mallory, Morshead, Norton, and I should make the first attempt on the peak, and with hearts full of anticipation we trudged up the slopes of snow and ice which led to our camp at 23,000 feet. We spent a good night at this camp, with excellent and varied food, starting off on a fine, calm morning to get, if possible, 2,000 feet higher and there pitch a couple of small tents. We had filled half a dozen thermos flasks with hot coffee and other liquids, made from snow melted the previous night, and we had roused our porters, discovering that only four of them were fit to accompany us. However, these four stalwarts were sufficient to carry the required loads. We had no time to be pessimistic over the fact (which we hardly realized at the time) that all our reserves of porters were exhausted before we had set foot on the mountain itself.



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We all carried rucksacks full of warm clothes, a little food and drink, and, in my case, sketching materials and a vest-pocket Kodak, with which all my photographs were obtained.

My first recollection of the actual ascent was the suddenness with which the west wind sprang up. We stepped onwards up the easy shoulder of the north-east ridge, which was covered in places with good, firm snow. On the lower part of this ridge we kicked steps, but on the upper and steeper portion it became necessary to use the axe; progress was rapid, a single chip or two being all that was required.

As soon as we were conveniently able to get off to the left (east) side of the ridge we did so to avoid the wind. At a height of some 24,500 feet we traversed on rough rocks and over snow-filled gullies to attain a stony slope (25,000 feet) at an angle of about thirty degrees. This could not be called an ideal camping ground; but everything else was steeper and more rocky. So we built two little platforms and pitched our tiny camp, weighting the tent-ropes with large stones, as pegs would have been useless, and here, after pemmican soup and coffee, we proceeded to spend the most uncomfortable of nights, two of us in each tent. Wherever we lay, and in whatever position, there were always a few sharp stones sticking into the tenderest parts of our anatomy. We obtained sleep in snatches of the most fitful and unresting variety, so much so that on the following morning we were quite glad to get up and stand on our less tender feet.

When we crawled out of our shelters we had a bitter disappointment. The wind was not too bad, but fresh snow had fallen during the night, and our chances of getting to the top seemed very doubtful. Moreover, we had gone only a hundred yards or so when Morshead announced that he was not feeling at all well, and could not come with us. We knew that it was unwise for him to overtax his strength, and we knew Morshead well enough to realize

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that if he complained of his health he must feel pretty bad ; so we went on without him, leaving him to go back to his tent and there to await our return.

For six hours or more we climbed steadily on, taking the lead by turns, as we did on all our climbs, thus sharing the responsibility and fatigue in truly democratic manner. We could progress only some 300 feet <sup>1</sup> in an hour, and every attempt to go faster than this for a few yards was perforce followed by a rest for a minute or so in order to regain breath enough to proceed. Our tempers were getting a bit edgy, and though no actual quarrels broke out, we were each feeling definitely quarrelsome. Our intelligence, too, was not at concert pitch. When, at a height of just under 27,000 feet, we discussed whether we should go farther or not, we chose the course of wisdom and retreat with the minimum of regret at not having reached the top of the mountain.

It was obvious that we must get back to Morshead in time to take him back to the North Col before nightfall if possible. The decision to go down at 2.30, wherever we might be at that time, had been made without disappointment and without disagreement. It was the right decision. Another night at 25,000 feet might have made it well-nigh impossible for Morshead to walk at all. That meant a risk of his losing his life, for the active movement of body and limbs is the surest preventive of frostbite, and a certain prophylactic against being frozen to death. At 2.30 we had reached a sheltered ledge behind a large rock. Here we stopped for half an hour to eat, do a rapid sketch, and take some photographs.

Truly the view was magnificent, and the north peak of Everest, itself 1,000 feet higher than the highest summit previously attained by man, was almost another 2,000 feet below us. Away to the north, beyond the cloudy and unsettled weather of southern Tibet, was a range of snow-covered peaks, some 80 miles distant. In the foreground

<sup>1</sup> Of vertical height.

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Cho Uyo and Gyachung Kang, only 10 miles from us and each over 26,000 feet high, were actually below the place where we stood. Of all the mountains we could see that day, only Everest, the one we were on, was higher than ourselves. However irritable and unintelligent we may have been rendered by the altitude, we were all enthralled by the magnificence of the view.

Yet we could not stay to enjoy it too long, and down we went, following our tracks, to the little camp 2,000 feet below. Morshhead was not too bad—or so he told us with his wonted optimism; but he was by no means fit, and we started off right away in order to get back to No. 4 Camp at the North Col before nightfall. The fresh snow had obliterated our tracks of the previous day, and we made a mistake which almost cost us our lives in traversing back to the ridge at too low a level.

I was going last, and Mallory first, at a place where we had to cross the steep head of a long, wide couloir which swept down to the foot of the mountain, 3,000 feet below us. The man in front of me slipped at a time when I was just moving myself, and I, too, was jerked out of my steps. Both of us began sliding at increasing speed down the icy couloir. The second man checked our progress for a moment, but could not hold us. He, too, was dragged off his feet. But Mallory had had just enough time to prepare for a pull on the rope, digging his axe firmly into the hard snow. It held, and so did the rope, and the party was saved.

I remember having no thought of danger or impending disaster, but experimenting, as I slipped down, as to whether I could control my pace with the pick of my axe in the snow and ice of the couloir, and whether the rest of us could do so, too. I had just decided that my pace was constant, and was not accelerating, and was feeling rather pleased with myself when the rope pulled me up with a jerk. My experiment was stopped, for Mallory had saved my life and the lives of us all. It is strange how much of

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one's common sense and judgment is warped by the effects of high altitude ; but, looking back on the incident, which we hardly noticed at the time, I am convinced that, by having the time and sense to do the right thing, Mallory prevented a serious disaster that day.

Chastened, and cursing at the effort required, those of us who had fallen kicked steps wearily in the snow and slowly ascended to join Mallory on his sound stance. From then onwards we were much more cautious. This was doubly necessary, for Morshead, though he stoutly endeavoured to appear normal, was obviously getting worse every minute, and we soon discovered that he had hardly the strength to walk. He kept suggesting a glissade or a slide, either of which might have spelt disaster to him, if not to us all. We had to use every possible persuasion to keep him moving and using his legs, and he was getting worse and worse. It was now dark and we were still some distance from the tents on the Col. A jump of 10 feet down an ice-cliff was successfully negotiated, Morshead being lowered on the rope. On we went through deeper snow, pushing and pulling our invalid, who persisted that he was all right, but was obviously not far from death.

We reached the tents at about ten o'clock—not a moment too soon. A great disappointment awaited us. We found all sorts of food, but no sign of stove or fuel. What had they done? Where had they put the stove before they left the camp in readiness for us to occupy? We were so indescribably thirsty that to eat a single morsel of food without a drink was unthinkable. And would Morshead last until the morning without sustenance?

A few spoonfuls of strawberry jam, to stave off danger of actual collapse from hunger, were all that we could manage without liquid refreshment, and on the next morning we hurried down to No. 3 Camp. Again we were forced to use the utmost caution, for in many places an avalanche of the newly fallen snow seemed almost inevitable. Fortunately it never occurred, and before noon the four of us

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trudged into the camp on the glacier, all alive, but one of us only just snatched from death and already badly frost-bitten in all his fingers and toes.

The lesson we learned from this episode is that a camp to which a party is returning, or is likely to return, should never be left unsupported. Did the Nanga Parbat Expedition of 1934 realize this? If they had acted upon it, the appalling disaster they underwent would most probably never have occurred.

What Morshead suffered during the next few weeks will never be known. Although outwardly and in company he was always cheerful, yet he used to get away by himself as often as he could, and cry like a child. After two months of torture his hands and feet cleared up, and though he lost portions of most of his fingers he was not seriously crippled. He was a stout fellow, an ideal member of a party of adventurers. Nevertheless, on the outing just recounted, he was at grips with death. Fortunately, we all realized it, or we might have been just a little careless or thoughtless, and given death the victory.

Anyway, we all arrived at No. 3 Camp alive—but with what a thirst! For thirty-six hours we had been struggling and panting in a dry, cold climate, losing pints of water from our lungs, and without any drink to repair the deficiency. I have never been so thirsty in my life; they tell me that I had seventeen large cups of tea without stirring from my seat. I expect we all did much the same.

It had been a fine and stimulating experience; we had been higher than the feet of man had ever trod before; but the mountain was not ours. It must be conquered, and it was now the turn of Finch and Geoffrey Bruce. It had been arranged that they should make the second attempt, and it was their own wish, as well as an interesting experiment, that they should carry with them oxygen apparatus. Without it, we others had been unsuccessful. Would its use make a difference of 2,000 feet and get them

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to the top? It was possible, though nobody in the world could have answered the question definitely. We had high hopes of their success as we bade them good-bye from No. 3 Camp on the following day, when they started on their gallant bid for the summit.

## CHAPTER X

### STORM AND AVALANCHE ON EVEREST

THEY SET OFF WITH A GOOD NUMBER OF PORTERS, OXYGEN, and provisions for the camp we had just vacated. From the top of the North Col, taking with them a Gurkha N.C.O., Tejbir, and some porters carrying food, tent, and oxygen, they camped higher than we had done and on a more exposed part of the mountain. Here they met with a most unpleasant experience. A storm arose in the night, threatening each moment to blow the tent down about their ears, and the following day had to be spent inside the flapping, draughty canvas. Both the tent and themselves were frequently lifted clear of the ground under the onslaughts of the gusts of wind. Snow blew in at every crevice, rendering almost any sort of comfort impossible. But their spirit remained undaunted; during the second night the wind dropped, and morning saw them starting out to brave the elements.

Tejbir soon had to retire to the tent once more, but Finch and Geoffrey Bruce pressed on and attained a height of some hundreds of feet higher than we had done a few days before. It was a stout performance, especially when the bad weather and their enforced day of semi-starvation in an icy wind are taken into consideration. Incidentally, Geoffrey Bruce, in the first climb of his life, had gone higher than man had ever gone before. They had penetrated well into the last 2,000 feet of Everest, but we were not satisfied until another attempt had been made.

Finch, Mallory, Crawford, and I were first selected to make it, but the rigours of his attempt on May 26th and 27th had taken it out of Finch, and he wisely retired while

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still on the glacier. The monsoon had just set in, and the snow was lying deep. It was of a thick consistency that we had not previously seen in the Himalaya. After digging out our tents and provisions at No. 3 Camp, we pitched the former again and spent June 6th in preparing ample stores for an attempt on the mountain. We intended to use oxygen.

When we began the initial walk to the foot of the North Col—normally an easy business—we found that we had to plough our way through snow of a most unpleasant texture, and took two hours for this first half-mile. I was leading, Mallory came next, then a porter, with Crawford fourth, and behind him thirteen more porters, the whole roped in four parties.

At 10.15 we started the ascent of the snowy slopes of the North Col, which are steepest near their lowest part. Here we considered it most likely that an avalanche would occur. We tried to start one by stamping and jerking and treading out long trenches across the slope. But the snow would not budge, and we put all thoughts of such a possibility from our minds. Higher up, the angle of the slope eased off, and we felt almost confident as we toiled upwards. The snow trod firmer, and our spirits rose as we discovered that we were gaining height more rapidly than we had thought the condition of the snow would allow.

I remember that I was some distance ahead of the others, for I had unroped and was kicking steps to gain time whilst Mallory and Crawford waited for all the porters to reach us. I had reached a point some 600 feet below our objective, the camp on the Col, when, with a subdued report ominous in the softness of its violence, a crack suddenly appeared about 20 feet above me. The snow on which I was standing began to move, slowly at first, and then faster.

I was rolled over, and slid down under the snow on a swift journey which I was convinced was my last. So utterly certain of this was I that I felt no conscious fear.



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To my intense relief, however, the sliding mass began to slow up and, after a short time, stopped. I was alive, but almost upside down. A jerky, but very determined struggle succeeded in getting my head in the usual position, and a little digging with my hands revealed daylight and, to my joy, some at least of my companions. I retrieved my hat—my axe had never left me—and after a few minutes' floundering I had rejoined Mallory and Crawford.

Together, we investigated. Some of the porters were visible, but only eight out of our party of seventeen. As for the rest, where were they? There were only two alternatives. Either they were still buried, or—— We soon realized that the avalanche must have swept over the edge of an ice-cliff some 60 or 70 feet high which was just below us, and that with it had gone those of our party who had been at the lowest level, two ropes of four or five porters each. We hurried down to the foot of the cliff and there saw several of them lying in the snow. One was uninjured; the other two appeared to have been killed by the fall.

Using as a guide the ropes which were tied to them, for the ropes must lead to other bodies buried perhaps deeply in the dense snow, we dug feverishly, with hands, axes, anything we could lay hold of, fighting perhaps for the lives of our faithful porters. The first to be dug out was my servant, Narbu. He was dead, poor fellow, with four cylinders of oxygen still tied to his back. The next, uncovered over half an hour after his burial, was, mercifully, alive. One other was dead, and although we dug for an hour or more in search of the last, we realized that he must by then have been lifeless, and we gave up our efforts, for it was getting late. Noel and Wakefield joined us at this time, and at once lent hands that were less exhausted than ours. When all had been done that could be done, we had revealed the terrible toll of seven fine fellows dead.

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Their companions wished them to be left, buried by the forces of God in His great white cemetery, a glorious tomb that was to be shared by Mallory two years later. Dejected, and admiring the courage and self-control of the cousins and brothers of those who had lost their lives, we trailed back to No. 3 Camp. I remember well the thought gnawing at my brain. "Only Sherpas and Bhotias killed—why, oh why could not one of us Britishers have shared their fate?" I would gladly at that moment have been lying there dead in the snow, if only to give those fine chaps who had survived the feeling that we had shared their loss, as we had indeed shared the risk.

It was a tragic ending to the third attempt on Everest. It was obvious to all that the monsoon was no time for further climbing in the higher Himalaya, and that we must, therefore, leave the Goddess Mother of the Snows in her veil of mist, to come again and try to surmount her glorious crest another year.

Downcast at the loss of our seven porters, yet in a way elated at the thought that Everest would one day be ours—for hitherto nobody had known whether it was possible to climb to, or even to exist at, a height of 27,000 feet—we evacuated the higher camps and in due course started off on our journey home. It was planned that we should spend a few weeks in the Kharta valley, in order to get a little relaxation, in duties as well as in atmospheric-pressure conditions, before setting out homewards.

Well do I remember the jolly evenings by the camp-fire in Sakiathang, where we had real logs—as many as we cared to collect from the surrounding trees—and a period of rest and independence; altogether a good holiday from the rigours of Everest. It was disappointing that, for three weeks, we were in almost continuous mist. The one morning when we were able to see the precipices of Chomo Lönzo, which vie with those of Nanga Parbat for size, and with the north side of Nanda Devi for verticality, made up for a great deal, but we never saw it again in

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spite of a day which some of us spent on the Kama glacier and the climbing of a peak near the Chog La pass by Crawford and myself.

Our misty holiday ended with a journey through the wonderful gorge of Arun, and the crossing of that river by a most insecure rope-bridge made of creepers. Mallory, Crawford, and I went home early, in order to have a bit of climbing around Kangchenjanga. On the very first day of our journey, the man from whom Crawford had hired his horse disappeared with the horse as well as with the money which he had been paid for its hire. This was at once reported to the local Dzongpen, who, as he failed to find the real culprit, resorted to custom and thrashed his elder brother instead.

During the period which followed, we climbed several virgin peaks of 18,000 feet and more, and visited many points on the great watershed which forms the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet. Occasionally we took our little Meade tents to the foot of the great peaks, but continued mist and rain rendered the snow so heavy and so unsafe that, with the accident on Everest still fresh in our memories, we declined to be venturesome and failed in most instances to reach the summit of our mountain. We made an attempt on the Jonsong peak, which, had we attained the summit, would have been the highest mountain climbed to the top, up to that time. It will be remembered that this peak was climbed on two occasions by members of the Dyrenfurth Kangchenjanga Expedition. Crawford and I failed at a very low level owing to the impossible weather. Nevertheless, we had a good time for several weeks in a region at that time unexplored save by Freshfield and some of the Sikkim Residents.

In one of the valleys we found the map so inaccurate that the first thing we did was to pace out a thousand-yard base-line, and proceed to survey the surrounding mountains with a prismatic compass. A primitive, but useful, map was the result. It saved us from losing our

## STORM AND AVALANCHE ON EVEREST

way on more than one occasion, for here, as ever, we were more often in the clouds than out of them.

We attained some seven summits, including two or three in the Chomiomo group, and had a few good views of the beautiful mountains around that peerless pyramid, Siniolchum, and the wonderful Fluted Peak. This latter we would no doubt have ascended had the weather and the condition of the snow allowed.

The holiday, on the whole, was interesting, if slightly disappointing. We arrived at Darjeeling at the beginning of August, to disperse soon after to our various posts. Personally, I was for travel in India. I had never been East before. Perhaps, I thought, I should never again have an opportunity to see the buildings and the glamorous life of India of which I had heard so much.

So, with three months of spare time and sixty pounds as my immediate possessions, I set out to see as much as possible of the architecture and the customs of India. I wanted, also, to collect some of its folk-tunes, of which I had already obtained a number in Tibet.

## CHAPTER XI

### I DISCOVER THE NEED OF INDIA'S SUFFERERS

TRAVELLERS WITH POETIC FEELING AND JOURNALISTIC ability have described the superb Halls of Audience in the Delhi Fort with their restrained and tasteful decoration, and the delicate rhythms of the drapery on the Buddhist statues of Sarnath and Sanchi. Not so many travellers, perhaps, have felt the Taj Mahal, that supreme monument to a loving wife, to be an ugly building, albeit made of beautiful material. Yet I confess that this was my first impression of the Taj. Having seen it several times since then, I have become used to its great fault of design, which is that the dome in the centre surmounts a tower or collar which is exactly, as viewed from the entrance gate, of the same width as the front portico of the Taj itself. This leads to the impression that the portico—a mere detail in the building—itself bears the colossal and beautiful dome. And the lighthouses at the corners—the less said about them the better. But the porticoes themselves, and the white marble with which the whole is built—one cannot but fall under their spell.

The Delhi Fort is a monument to British vandalism in that many of the buildings were destroyed in order to build exceptionally ugly barracks. If the demolished buildings were even half as beautiful as those that are left, the fort at Delhi must have been one of the wonders of the world. I confess to a sense of shame when I consider that this enlightened nation of ours, as recently as a few generations ago, thus imposed Western expediency upon Eastern beauty to the ruin of the latter. Delhi is thus

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not only a monument to our vandalism but to our lack of imagination, our inability to put ourselves in the position of those in whose country we find ourselves. If we are, as many say we are, the finest colonists in the world, all one can say is—What must the other colonizing nations be like ?

I saw the wonderful carvings of Sanchi, the Buddhist buildings of 2,000 years ago, decorated with bas-reliefs to which our most accomplished sculptors are only just beginning to approach in culture and style. I explored the caves of Ellora, nearly as old, with their really marvellous sculpture surpassed only in their period by that of the Seven Pagodas near Madras, models of rhythm and dignity. I bathed in the lake at Ramtek and viewed the lovely temple where Rama trod on his way from the Himalayas to Ceylon ; I witnessed the starving country-folk and the crowded hovels of the Hugli ; factories where everything possible was done for the workers, like the Carnatic Mills at Madras ; and underground dungeons where little girls make matches for twelve hours a day at a starvation wage. I was spat at in the streets of Benares, and to this day bear the expectorant anti-Britisher no malice. If I had been he, I should have been tempted to do the same myself. In that same sacred city I saw the vice, deceitfulness, and degradation of generations of "holiness" stamped indelibly upon the faces of priests in a particularly sacred temple ; and the simple country-man with eager devotion bathing in the Ganges to wash away his sins, far fewer and more venial than those of the priest who (for a fee) bade him do so.

These and many other things did I witness during the three months of holiday travel. It was in the extreme south of the country, only 20 miles from its southernmost point, Cape Comorin, that I saw the thing which changed the entire plan of my life, something far more impressive than the mighty Himalaya, far more compelling than the call of the mountains. That something was the unrelieved suffering of India.

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I had met Dr. Pugh, of Neyyoor in Travancore, whilst he was in England on furlough a year or two before. He had told me that if ever I was in the East he would be pleased if I would look him up. Little did I think that I was so soon to have a chance of accepting this vague invitation. But here I was, in 1922, at his bungalow, where I noticed with a shock that the healthy little man whom I had met in 1920 was pale and thin, and obviously working himself to death. With no other assistance save that of Miss Ferguson, an efficient nurse, but only temporary, he was managing what was then, and may be still, the largest medical mission (as regards the number of patients dealt with annually) in the world.

He had to look after Neyyoor Hospital, which then had nearly a hundred beds, as well as fourteen branch hospitals and two leper homes. In addition, he had twenty Indian doctors and many other Indian hospital servants and nurses under his charge. He did almost all the operative work, having developed this side of the hospital's activities in a most remarkable manner, and had completely reorganized the system on which the Medical Mission was run. All this was done in a tropical climate of continual damp heat, with a body which was far from physically fit.

I had just a fortnight to spare before I had to set sail again for England, so I told Pugh that I would do his operations for him for ten days if he would get some rest. I don't suppose that he got much, as there were always countless other things to be done, but I stayed for the ten days and did a large number of operations in that time. It was then that I first realized the need and the suffering of India's village folk.

Some of the towns in India have quite good hospitals, but in many parts they are few and far between. The State of Travancore had its own medical service, with a General Hospital at Trivandrum (the capital), and a series of smaller hospitals and dispensaries scattered throughout

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its thickly-populated country of varying degrees of efficiency. But there were very few places serving the six million inhabitants of Travancore and the adjacent southern districts of Madras Presidency where surgical operations were being done with efficiency and skill. The Salvation Army has a hospital, which was then of small size, in Nagercoil (some 10 miles distant from Neyyoor), but their surgical work was at that time principally ophthalmic.

Very few patients—and, in the villages, almost none at all—could afford to go the 450 miles to Madras for hospital treatment; yet it is in the villages that disease is most rampant, most neglected, and most maltreated. So the South Travancore Medical Mission, which in 1938 has been established for a hundred years, had gradually filled some of the gaps by placing hospitals and dispensaries in the densely-populated southern half of Travancore, most of them in places where no Government hospital was available, and all working in a system the centre of which was (and still is) the hospital at Neyyoor.

Several of these branch hospitals can take in forty or fifty patients, while some have operating-theatres and labour rooms, though others are chiefly equipped for dealing with out-patients and have but ten or fifteen beds. Each is in the charge of a qualified Indian doctor, with a fully trained dispenser and often a trained Indian nurse as well. The whole Medical Mission deals with some 150,000 out-patients every year, and for many of these represents their only hope of efficient treatment.

The South Travancore Medical Mission, to give it its full name, was started by the London Missionary Society at a time (1838) when little or no medical work of any kind was being done by Government or other agencies in India, and when the art of medicine was far from scientific and the science of surgery was anything but an art. Drugs were dispensed and elementary operations were performed by the medical missionary, Dr. Ramsay, to supply the needs of the people who were almost entirely at the mercy of the



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superstitious and barbarously crude village medicine-men and the ineffective traditionalists of the Ayurvedic system. It is questionable whether the treatment accorded by the Medical Mission in its early days was much better than these out-of-date alternatives, but, at any rate, it was given freely to the patients and no doubt used by the missionaries as a bait to catch the unwary and lure them into hearing the somewhat formal and often, I fear, narrow-minded theology which in those days was known as the "gospel." But we must not be too critical. These early missionaries may have taught a religion which was more concerned with theories about Christ than with the teaching of the Master Himself, but their self-sacrificing and truly Christian lives bore fruit in the building-up of some very fine characters who formed the leaders of the Christian Church in Travancore in the nineteenth century.

As medical knowledge became more scientific, and more especially as surgery was developed by the introduction first of anæsthetics and later of antiseptics, the Medical Mission grew rapidly. The old Ayurvedic system remained where it had always been for the last two thousand years; the medicine-man of the country districts was untrained, ignorant, and cruel, and remained so, but scientific medicine—what is known in India as "Western medicine"—advanced steadily and became infinitely superior to the indigenous system of Ayurveda and the lack of system of the Vaidyan or medicine-man. By the time that the Medical Mission had been established for fifty years, there were a number of its branches scattered through the southern half of Travancore. The land for several of these was given by the then ruling Maha Rajas. The Government of Travancore encouraged the Mission to start more branches, actually commissioning two of them. By that time the Government had started a medical service of its own, building hospitals in various parts of the country.

Although these Government hospitals steadily increased both in number and efficiency, the Medical Mission did the

## THE NEED OF INDIA'S SUFFERERS

same, and an ever-increasing number of patients came for treatment to Neyyoor and the branch hospitals. In spite of the fact that, owing to the activities of Governments and Missions, there are now a large number of hospitals in India, the need of the country people is still far from being adequately catered for. Most Indian doctors, after qualification, settle in the towns. I know personally several areas in South India where live a hundred thousand people without a single qualified doctor among them.

Under these conditions, it is obvious that any properly conducted and efficient hospital will find itself very busy. It would in any country. But the unqualified "native physicians" who practise in the villages are completely ignorant of the cause of disease, which they usually attribute to devils, or explain by superstitions. They know little more of the cure of it. A "cure" often resolves itself into incantations and mantras,<sup>1</sup> or consists in the administration of drugs in poisonous doses. Thus, disease such as cancer or tuberculosis, both very common in Travancore, is often rendered by them incurable before the patient, in desperation, approaches a Mission or Government hospital, only to be told that he has come too late.

However, as time goes on, the good results obtained by scientific as compared with traditional indigenous methods is gradually soaking into the life and outlook of the simple and superstitious countryfolk, as also into the conservative minds of their more fortunate brothers. In increasingly greater numbers they are coming to the hospitals at once, without first seeking the aid of their "native physician." Every year more and more cases seek our help in earlier stages and more treatable conditions.

Dr. Pugh had developed the surgical side of the work at Neyyoor to a great extent, as I have said, and when I arrived there in 1922 I found many patients in hospital awaiting operation. Some of them had been awaiting

<sup>1</sup> The repetition of words or verses from the Hindu or other ancient writings, supposedly of <sup>divine</sup> ~~magical~~ significance.

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their turn for weeks. A rough look round the country indicated to me how few and far between were the places where a patient in need of major surgery could be adequately treated. There were, of course, even fewer such places then than there are to-day, but even at the present time, for each million of people in the south of India there is less than one hospital where surgical operations are adequately performed, and in some cases these hospitals are but poorly equipped and their work is deficient both in quality and quantity. The unhealed disease and unrelieved suffering in India are even now so colossal as to defy imagination.

Can the reader wonder, therefore, that after spending those ten days at Neyyoor I felt so urgent a call to do what I could to relieve it? At any rate, I decided, without hesitation, that this should be my life's work. In fact, I have often told my friends that if I had not then gone to India at the call of suffering I should never have dared to look God in the face, nor to say prayers to Him again. Nobody who saw such need and neglected to relieve it could call himself either a Christian or a sportsman. I take no credit for taking this decision, and deserve none. I simply felt that my job lay in Neyyoor, and that there was no getting out of it. But I knew that there would be a wrench to come, when once I got back to London and concerts and picture-exhibitions and all the jolly things of Town. Then there was to be a parting with my home in Westmorland and the Lakeland fells, every summit of which was dear to me; with my family whom I loved so intensely; with Europe, where are the Alps and the Dolomites and a thousand other delights. That wrench had got to be faced, and a discovery I made when I reached London made the facing of it no easier. I found that my Hospital (University College) had given me a position on its surgical staff, which meant that the front door to eminence in my chosen profession had been opened.

I could see that the wrench was going to beat me if I

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didn't look out, so I went straight to a friend whom I knew would understand ; I told Murray Webb-Peploe, then at St. Thomas's Hospital, exactly how the land lay. It is somehow far harder to shirk a duty when someone else, whose friendship one values, knows all about it. My father knew, as a matter of fact. I had recently had two days with him in India, whilst he was on a visit with other officials of the London Missionary Society to examine that Society's work in India and make important decisions about it. In those two days at Bellary I had told him my feelings, and he had suggested that I should revolve them in my head for a bit. But he indicated that if I did go out to India he would be very pleased.

So, within two days of reaching England, I bearded the lion in his den, and informed the gentle and courteous Professor Choyce that I was sorry, but—I could not stay on in London after what I had seen in India. Choyce was very nice about it, especially since he probably thought I was completely mad thus to throw away the chance of a lifetime, a chance which opened up the career which, a few months previously, I had lived for. My friends at hospital probably thought the same ; but then, they had not seen India's need. At all events, I remember that when I had thus burned my boats a great peace of mind, and a contented feeling that things were all right, came over me.

I felt that I had at last obtained an object in life. I had had an unsettled existence, both during the War and after it, had finished, sleeping very often in a tent, sometimes in an hotel ; now cooking my own food in a dugout, now eating a good dinner with well-chosen wine in London ; at one time shivering among the snows of the Alps or Himalaya, at another scorching under a tropical sun. Now that was all ended, and it was to be the tropical sun for the rest of my life. So be it. It was a grand thing to have got it settled and off my chest. "The peace of God which passeth all understanding . . ."

## CHAPTER XII

### A GLORIOUS MOUNTAIN HOLIDAY

THE WINTER OF 1922-3 WAS FULL OF HARD WORK. IN little over a week I had to write all the music for the Everest film and arrange it for a suitably small orchestra of nine players, which was all the committee would allow me. Musicians know how much more difficult it is to get an effect out of a small orchestra than out of a large one. Add to this my comparative inexperience in writing music and you will see that it was a stiff job. But I was anxious to try to preserve the atmosphere of Tibet in arranging for Western instruments the folk-tunes I had collected in such an Eastern environment. I knew what I wanted the music to say, but I was only too conscious that I was not competent to do the job properly.

The last page of the score was hardly dry when the curtain in the Philharmonic Hall rang up for the first of an unrelenting series of lectures with the film, which lasted for over six months. During the whole of that time I had two, or sometimes three, lectures to give every day; in London for two months, and thereafter in all the big cities, a week in each. Several of the musicians travelled round with me, one of them being the composer, Gordon Jacob, who has since made musical history and has, I hope and believe, a great future before him. Their company was entertaining and saved me from the loneliness and boredom which otherwise might have accompanied this interminable lecture-tour.

There followed a really glorious mountain holiday, the best by far among the many I have had. It began in the Dolomites, and my mother and father and brother went

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with me. There is a delightful contrast between these difficult but short climbs on magnesian limestone—where, if the rock is sound, as it usually is, the steepest faces are surmountable with safety—and Himalayan mountaineering, where things are dangerous without being difficult, and a single mountain may take many days to climb. Our party consisted of my brother and myself, occasionally with the addition of Frank Smythe, whom I found staying at Cortina, and in whose introduction to rock-climbing I had taken a part three years before in Yorkshire. We had a splendid time, finding great joy in gripping the firm, steep, and jagged rocks, picking our way by a combination of our own sense and an imperfectly understood German guide-book.

Footholds do not get scratched in the Dolomites, for climbers there usually use rope-soled shoes or rubbers, and, therefore, leave no traces. This makes route-finding harder, but better practice and more enjoyable. The biggest climb we did was the traverse of the Langkofel, going up the north-east face, along a terrace of great length. Round its corner was a rock-face of incredible steepness, up which my brother was the only one of us who could lead. Smythe and I both had a try, but in vain. After several hundred feet the steepness seemed to ease off and incline towards the summit. My brother climbed, as always, magnificently, and with the moral support of the rope, Smythe and I followed, until at length we could all move together, and found ourselves eventually on the top of the peak.

It was a marvellous day, affording a beautiful view over the rock-peaks on three sides and the flat-topped Sella Mountain on the other. Nevertheless, we had to get down again, and the German guide-book read backwards was more difficult than ever. Moreover, Smythe's rope-soled shoes were dropping to bits and there was a good deal of snow on the descent. We found the way, however, and were soon at a level at which I could unrope and

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make a dash for Smythe's boots at the Sella Haus. Hours later I rejoined the others in time to give Smythe a comfortable walk home for the last mile or two. This must have been a relief to him, for he had come down many hundreds of feet of steep, snowy gullies, digging his bare toes into the snow ; incidentally, without any complaint or hesitation.

At San Martino my brother and I did a good many climbs, starting early and meeting our parents at previously arranged spots for a picnic tea. This was the most delightful part of the holiday for me, or, for that matter, of any climbing holiday I have ever had. The family picnic, with all its sociability and jollity, was combined with the most enjoyable rock-climbs on San Martino's peerless little peaks. The day we did the Cimone della Pala was the best day of them all. The Cimone is the glory of the southern Dolomites. It rises first to a shoulder, without great difficulty ; above that the rock steepens, and in one or two places ropes are fixed, though they are neither long nor numerous enough to spoil the actual climb.

Soon we were agrip with the narrow ridge which leads up and up towards the real Cimone, the great knife-edge of rock which, viewed from the side, looks much like many other mountains. When seen end on, it takes on an entirely new significance, and appears like an incredibly gigantic and toppling tower. After climbing up another steep rock-face, well provided with rough holds for hand and foot, we suddenly found ourselves to be on top of this huge ridge. We were looking down on the eastern side to a steep glacier, from which rose the immense wall, unique among rocky peaks on the top of which we were crawling. Guido Rey called it "a long wave of stone, towering motionless to the sky, and apparently on the point of breaking." A better description could scarcely be written.

Along this airy and extraordinary summit ridge we clambered, always safe yet always feeling that the huge yet delicate wave of rock would indeed break. Here

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blocks are poised threateningly, and there we can walk for some yards on a smooth two-foot path ; now we climb a little needle, to drop again to a shattered gap. On and on for hundreds of feet, with the wonderful, eerie, overhanging eastern face in deep shadow beneath us, and blazing sunshine striking in cascades of light on the jagged but equally steep western side of the wave. All too soon we were on the top, and took our hats off to our distant relation, E. R. Whitwell, who made the first ascent of this amazing peak. But time was short, and we must hurry down to avoid parental anxiety and cold tea. A rapid scramble down the shattered ridge to the col, and a careful kicking of steps along the first two or three hundred feet of the glacier which led northwards to our picnic place, then a glissade—the best in Italy—gradually easing off into a run down. At the bottom, tea with two parents, no longer anxious, and a walk in the late evening down the road to San Martino. That, for sheer enjoyment, was the best day of the holiday.

Soon, my people had to return home, and my brother and I wandered off to do the Vajolet Towers, of which we had read so much. They are the most surprisingly slender and vertical "mountains"—if such a term be admissible—that I have ever witnessed, for all the world like a gigantic castle on a dream-peak of steep rock. We only had time for two of the three towers, but the passage between these was a unique experience. One straddles across a gap some 3 feet wide, which continues for some hundreds of feet both above and below at approximately the same width. Such is the roughness of Dolomite rock that the climb down to, and up from, this airy straddle is neither difficult nor dangerous. From the top of the middle tower, we saw quite easily our way downwards ; in fact, only the ledges and outcrops of rock which compose the way down are visible from the summit. All else is completely vertical and thus out of sight. We soon got down and set off in search of a meal in Campitello.



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Late that evening, after a well-earned dinner, we heard sounds of revelry in the adjoining restaurant, so we went along to see the fun. The village was *en fête*, and dancing to violins and accordion. We sat at a table and ordered that excellent drink, zabaglione. Soon one of the lads of the village espied his lady-love in the arms of another, and decided to do something about it. A violent quarrel ensued, and before you could say "knife" everybody in the room was involved, having ranged themselves on one side or the other. Bottles were flying about, fists and furniture freely used, and several erstwhile revellers were soon bruised and bleeding. We thought it wisest to go while the going was good, and as we passed through the now shattered glass door the landlord, disconsolate at the damage and frightened for his licence or its equivalent, implored us not to inform the police. Assurance was readily given and we retired to rest. We had plans for some of the Sella peaks on the morrow.

In due course we worked our way across several more summits to the railway which soon brought us to Venice. Here we rested for two days, eating ices in the Piazza di San Marco, the most beautiful square in the world. In the intervals between the ices we investigated the enchantments of Titian, the daubs of Tintoretto, the marvels of Carpaccio, and the sentimentalities of del Sarto in that cathedral of art, the Accademia. This slack interlude to a strenuous holiday ended, we endured a crowded and comfortless journey to Milan and Grindelwald. Here we joined Beetham, Rusk, and Brown to make a party to explore the Oberland.

One day we tested the oxygen apparatus, which had been modified and slightly lightened with a view to the next Everest Expedition in 1924. We chose a way up the Eiger which involved the maximum of cutting and kicking steps, so as to test the balance of the apparatus and to see to what extent it hampered our movements. We got up all right in spite of its awkward size and thirty

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pounds' weight, but we were glad when the tests were finished and we could climb again unhindered. Another day we ascended the Schreckhorn, one of the noblest of the Oberland peaks, and on descending it a curious accident took place. Close to the summit, whilst walking along a ridge, one of my feet stuck in a cleft of rock. The unexpectedness of it overbalanced me and I literally fell over the edge of the cliff, my foot still held firm, as in a vice, by the heel of the boot where the cleft gripped it. A sharp pain in my ankle made me feel faint, but I recovered my position on the ridge, took the erring boot off, and managed to dislodge it with a struggle. After ten minutes' rest I was able to go on, and made my way down to the hut safely if slowly.

Next morning our objective was the traverse of the Finsteraarhorn. I got up two hours before the others and started along the glacier, limping, and in a good deal of pain. But by the time the others had caught up with me, the pain was less severe and the stiffness had gone. The peak was traversed to the Concordia hut. Next day we climbed the Aletsch-horn on the way to Ried, and followed it up during the following two days by climbing the Bietsch-horn, going on to Randa for the Weisshorn by the Schalligrat. By that time my damaged foot was in good trim again, and we made the ascent quickly.<sup>1</sup>

While crossing the spur of rock, which forms a huge step in the glacier almost due south of the summit of the Weisshorn, I was leading over a sloping ledge, traversing to the left. A tremendous block of stone which I happened to touch began slowly to slide across the two-foot-wide ledge of rock. I saw at once that, if it fell, it would certainly push me off and probably kill the entire party.

<sup>1</sup> The interest of this accident to my foot lies in the fact that on arrival home in London after the holiday I X-rayed my foot and found that the fibula had been fractured. The somewhat unorthodox treatment—climbing mountains—for a broken bone in the leg was evidently a great success.

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But so nearly was it stable that I was able to hold it in position with one hand. I shouted to Beetham and Rusk to get firm, in case when I let go my hold I should be swept off the face of the rock. Then, after a few moments, I removed my hand, and as swiftly as I could in the dangerous situation I sidled along in Beetham's direction. Left to itself, the huge block started again to slide and finally toppled over the cliff, to break to pieces on the lower rocks with a thunderous roar. It must have weighed a number of tons, and, if it had been just a little more unstable when I first disturbed it, might easily have wiped out the whole party. I always look upon this incident as the narrowest escape I have had among the mountains.

We arrived in due course at the foot of the Schalligrat, which was in fine condition, and brought us in four hours to the summit of the Weisshorn. More excitement was in store for us, for thunder was in the air, and a large storm-cloud was obviously approaching us. As we were on the exposed and entirely unsheltered icy ridge which leads eastward from the summit, the lightning began to flash around us. Our axes fizzed with the electrical discharges, the brims of our hats tingled where they touched our scalps, and a few hundred yards away lightning flashes played. Quicker than it takes to read this, we had all scrambled down a few yards of the precipitous northern slope of the arête. We lay, pressed flat against the snow, digging in the picks of our axes to prevent ourselves from slipping. Then the full fury of the storm burst upon us. We all afterwards averred that we had felt one of the lightning flashes. Whether that was really so or not does not matter; anyway, it did us no harm, and within another half-hour we were scrambling rapidly down the "ordinary way" in brilliant evening sunshine.

The following day Rusk had to leave us, and Beetham and I attempted in this glorious weather to carry through an expedition we had long planned and prepared for—the complete traverse of the Gabelhorn, Wellenkuppe, Trift-

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horn, Rothorn, Schallhorn, and Weisshorn. We took with us eiderdown sleeping-bags, bought for the occasion at a fabulous price, and left the Trift Hotel at an early hour.

Unfortunately, it was not to be. The weather showed signs of an impending change. We went up the Ober-Gabelhorn in a freezing wind, and on the traverse to the Wellenkuppe it was all we could do in the storm to keep our feet. Reluctantly, we had to come down, back to the hotel. Our expedition was then definitely and disappointingly at an end, for a real change to settled bad weather sent us home to England. We were baulked of our last climb, but after all, thirty-two peaks was not a bad lot for one season.

## CHAPTER XIII

### PASSAGE TO INDIA

IN OCTOBER I WAS DUE TO SAIL FOR INDIA, AND THE MANY preparations for six years' residence there, including the collection of equipment for another Everest Expedition, fully occupied the intervening weeks. During one of these weeks, however, I found time to get to know the girl who was afterwards to become my wife. She stayed with us at Kendal, and accompanied us on some good family walks and picnics. It was at that time that I first gave serious thought to matrimony. But I already knew that I should be one of those who were to make a further attempt on Everest during the following year, and it was obviously unfair to ask a girl to marry me immediately before I took this serious risk. It was just as unfair, so it seemed to me, to ask her to become engaged to me during such an anxious period. So I said nothing, being content to register a devout hope that no one would snatch her away in the meanwhile, a hope which, happily for me, was fulfilled.

The lectures on the Everest Expedition had provided me with some seven hundred pounds, which, reinforced by the kind gifts of several of my relations, and by a fund which Dr. Pugh had collected in India, sufficed to buy a good and up-to-date X-ray and lighting plant for Neyyoor. The collection of the various components for this apparatus occupied a good deal of my time during the summer of 1923, and these impedimenta were ready only just in time for me to take them with me. At length, all preparations were over, and at the end of September I set sail, after saying good-bye to my parents, for five or six years. What would that time bring forth? Death on Everest? A

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home visited by bereavement? Another European War? All sorts of things might happen. I confess to no anxiety at that time. One thing I knew: for the first time in my life, perhaps, I was conscious of doing the right and utterly inevitable thing.

"God's in His Heaven; all's right with the world" is a dangerous slogan if it leads one to a reactionary content with things as they are, but it can be the heartening expression of great inward joy, and it sums up my feelings as I left all that I had hitherto held worth living for, to exchange them for something unknown, but obviously better. There were still unspoken questions, of course. Was I kidding myself? Was I treating this India trip as a mere adventure? Was I pretending it to be all God's will, whilst actually starting on an enterprise of selfishness? These things are always difficult to resolve entirely. I have always maintained that most actions can be traced to selfish motives, and perhaps, after all, it is but "hot air" to speak of following the will of God on such occasions. So the question is best left open, lest a charge of hypocrisy be preferred against me.

My fellow-passengers to India consisted of the usual mixed bag. I cannot help recording that the missionaries among them were not the most pleasant people on board. I was reprimanded by them for dancing and playing bridge, and whilst they were no doubt earnest and devoted souls, yet they seemed incapable of absorbing the elementary fact that my conscience was my own. One day the most delightful old lady drew me to one side and intimated that she had noticed me drinking a whisky and soda. I had the pleasure of informing her that there were other occasions on which people had objected to "a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." "But," I suggested, "perhaps that is not in your edition of the Bible." After this, I was very little molested, though I received a good many sidelong glances and much unexpressed censure. On arrival at Colombo, these good people were met

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by their friends, to whom they introduced me as "a medical missionary; medical, no doubt, but missionary—we question it!"

Well, it takes all sorts to make a world. Nevertheless, I cannot help thinking that such people do more harm than good to the Kingdom of God, and when I hear objections to missions and missionaries, I am inclined to agree with them heartily—so far as that variety is concerned. I am thankful to say, however, that this kind of missionary belongs to a type which is rapidly dying out.

It is tragic that to a very large number of people Christianity is mainly a code of laws—rather petty and unpleasant laws—combined with a system of dogma, rigid and narrow in some respects, attributing to God the human failings of jealousy and cruelty and a standard of justice beside which that of Jeffreys seems lamb-like. That way understood, the Christian religion will never solve the problems of men and nations, nor make the old world better and happier. "Christianity will never save the world—but Christ can and does." The greatest thing about Christ was His love and sympathy and understanding. Surely these qualities are the first that a missionary should try to show in his or her life, both towards the natives of the country in which he works and towards the natives of his own country? A planter who is a great friend of mine once said to me: "I've come to the conclusion that there is only one thing in one's life in a country like this that really matters—and that is that one should really *like* people. If there are some you can't like, try to understand them." Another of my friends once told me: "If there is anyone whom I dislike, even though I may feel him to be an utter outsider, I pray for him every day. If you do this, you soon get an interest in the chap, and may end up by liking him."

Some of us prefer one way; some the other. They are both true, and it is especially noticeable in the East how much ill-feeling and unhappiness are caused simply by

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not trying to understand people and thus being unable to love them.

There was a young man among my fellow-passengers whose story is worth recording. About thirty years old, he had undergone seven or eight operations for what he knew vaguely as "some obscure form of obstruction of the intestine." While on board he was seized with another attack, and the ship's doctor asked me to stay on the boat from Colombo to Madras in case I should be needed to perform an operation. This proved to be unnecessary, since the patient improved a great deal after leaving Colombo. I learnt the purpose of his voyage, which was that before he should succumb to a fatal attack of this nature, he should be able to visit his father in Calcutta, to say good-bye to him. I afterwards heard that he reached Calcutta all right, and was able to greet his father. Then, a fortnight later, he faced that expected fatal seizure. It was a tragic business.

Comic relief on the voyage was provided by a man at Birkenhead. I had never met him before, but he confided to me the care of his son (aged nineteen or twenty) whom he was sending round the world "to see life before settling down to business at home." I was specially entrusted with the task of seeing "that none of these women you meet on board ship get him into their toils." As fate would have it, it was not long before this very thing occurred. Now, in these matters I always prefer to live and let live, but I had given a promise to the father and therefore had to do something about it. The only plan of campaign that suggested itself to me was that I should try to woo the lady of his affections and lure her away from the youth to myself! Anyone who knows me, my lack of facial attraction, and my gauche manner, will roar with laughter at the very thought of such a task. But—marvellous to relate—my wiles succeeded, and the lady was duly diverted from her first "love" to an unattractive schemer in the shape of myself! With womanly intuition



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she correctly diagnosed the situation before we reached port, but my obligation was discharged and my honour satisfied—though not in a particularly honourable way.

At last we came to Madras, where I bought a Ford car and departed for Neyyoor. There had been a large breakfast, with the usual decorations and Welcome Meeting, all ready for me, but owing to the car, I arrived a day late. I therefore came in beneath a bedraggled triumphal arch, inscribed—

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to find that the party had ended and the curtain rung down on *Hamlet* without that person's appearance on the stage.

Dr. and Mrs. Pugh were very kind hosts for several months—in fact, until the empty, eighty-year-old bungalow which was to be my home had been refurnished and made ready for my occupation. This huge edifice, erected at a time when the European in India liked to spread himself and to live in a large, bare, and uncomfortable house, was completely devoid of furniture. I therefore had the rather pleasing job of designing, and getting local carpenters to make, every stick of furniture the house was to contain. To a lover of art such as I, this was one of the jollier side-shows; and provided ample employment for my scanty hours of relaxation. In a few months the large house became a comfortable home. I cannot help feeling now that it is a terrible mistake that a man who leaves home, and goes abroad to follow Him who had not where to lay His head, should follow so far behind as to live in a house which, in comparison with those of the surrounding Indians, is a palace.

The missionary who renounces all creature comforts and lives on curry and rice exclusively, in a poky little house with no ventilation, wearing as his garments those of the natives around him, although conforming thereby more closely to the Franciscan type, often lasts only a short time before sunstroke or indigestion or some tropical

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disease carries him off and puts an end to his labours. The more usual type who lives in "European style" in a house with all comforts is, in my opinion, equally wrong, though in the opposite direction. The ideal, I believe, is to safeguard one's health by suitable food and fresh air, but to be so completely friendly and accessible to the natives of his adopted country as to excite no jealousy nor feeling of inferiority. Whatever one does, people are apt to misunderstand, but often that can neither be avoided nor anticipated.

After I had been in India for ten years or more, one of the leading young men of the village came rather apologetically to my bungalow, presented me with a letter, and fled. The chief purport of the letter was an appeal that I should treat the Indians in the same way as Europeans, instead of seeing Indians on the veranda while "letting European visitors come inside the house." My wife and I live almost exclusively on the veranda and see all visitors there, of whatever nationality. It is far too hot and close to use the inside of the house except for the midday and evening meals. Even so, I do not believe the chap in question was quite convinced when I assured him that this was the case, and that neither ourselves nor our Indian nor European visitors used the inside of the house more than was absolutely necessary.

## CHAPTER XIV

### A MISSIONARY'S JOB

IT WAS NOT LONG BEFORE I DISCOVERED THE GREAT NUMBER and variety of tasks which a missionary, and more particularly a medical one, has to undertake. In the professional side of the work, although I had come to Neyyoor primarily as a surgeon, and, indeed, found that operative surgery constituted my principal task, I quickly realized that I was expected to take my full share of responsibility in all other branches of the healing art. In a London hospital, if a patient complained of his eyes, one had been able to refer him to the ophthalmic department; if the disease was in the nose, one sent him along to the specialist in noses and throats; or, if he showed some malady of the skin, he was directed to the dermatologist. In Neyyoor, Dr. Pugh and I were responsible between us for all these "sideshowes" and many more.

The X-ray apparatus had to be set up. Here I was on *terra cognita*, for I had been in charge of an X-ray plant for over a year on the Western Front during the War. The knowledge I had then gained, albeit with a vastly inferior apparatus, stood me in good stead at Neyyoor and is still of help to me. But in some other respects I found myself poorly qualified. Like many medical students, I had treated diseases of skin, eyes, ears and nose and throat with scant courtesy, and had attended lectures and clinics upon these subjects merely because I had to. How I wished later that I had taken them more seriously. As a medical missionary I found that I was expected to assume responsibility for all sorts and conditions of patients. If any complained of eyes or skin, there was the over-

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worked but ever-willing Pugh to consult ; but for the most part I was my own eye department. I had to treat my own patients for skin, ear, throat or any other diseases they happened to be suffering from.

Having done nothing but surgery since my qualification in the early months of the War, I found that most of my knowledge of medicine had passed into oblivion. I had to read up my medicine and gynæcology as well as these other subjects, and try at the same time to keep abreast of modern teaching and methods in all these things, surgery included. In London, and during the War, one always had plenty of other people with whom to share responsibility and to discuss special cases. Here in India, Pugh and I were solely responsible for them all. Some of our Indian assistants knew very much more practical medicine than I, yet they seldom ventured to express an opinion, greatly preferring the white man to take full responsibility for everything. In short, I rapidly grew to understand that a medical missionary had to be a Jack-of-all-trades, even if he were master of none, or of only one. Whether he likes it or not, he finds himself a veritable Poo-Bah without that gentleman's self-confidence. Of course, it was worse—far worse—when Pugh retired three years later and left me in full charge. But of that, more anon.

One of the crying needs of Neyyoor Hospital in 1923 was the need for expansion. Pugh had had a full-time job, and although I had hoped to relieve him a little, it was soon apparent to both of us that we were in the same boat, and that the result of my arrival at Neyyoor was simply that twice as much work could be done by two people. In other words, we each discovered that we had full-time jobs with no time for relief on either side. Within a few months of my coming we deemed it essential to build fresh accommodation. The women's side of the work was in the greater need, for up to that time the female wards had been in the front block close to the road. So accessible to all and sundry were they that it is almost

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true to say that no respectable woman would attend as an in-patient except in a private ward. Together with the building of the X-ray department we therefore embarked on a scheme to build a completely new women's hospital, with a wall around it, at the south-west corner of the compound.

It was then that I discovered that another item in the equipment of the medical missionary is a knowledge of the architect's job. Together we designed two substantial buildings which have developed into a complete women's hospital with two labour rooms, labour ward, large ward for medical patients, general surgical ward upstairs, and three isolation wards for septic or infectious cases. All this, with a number of small kitchens for the use of patients who prefer (for caste or other reasons) to cook their own food, is surrounded by a wall and provided with a gate which is only open to men for two hours in the middle of the day. The total cost, with accommodation for fifty beds, has been less than £2,000. One-third of this sum was provided by the funds of an embroidery industry for the women of Trivandrum, run by Mrs. Arthur Parker, the wife of the L.M.S. missionary in that city. Labour is so cheap, and good stone so plentiful, in Travancore, that a pound goes about as far out there (in providing hospital buildings) as £15 would go in Britain. It is of interest to note that the total cost of Neyyoor Hospital buildings, with 180 beds, X-ray and electric-light plant, pathology laboratory, offices, dispensaries, stores and everything else, has been approximately £5,000. This does not include equipment ; but a hospital in England of similar accommodation would now cost nearly £100,000 to construct.

The first year of my life in India was necessarily somewhat unsettled. The Everest Expedition of 1924 was to start in February, and I had hardly settled down to the life of Neyyoor before having to leave for Darjeeling on a five-months' holiday to Everest. In the intervening months I learned that, putting aside professional and

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technical matters, there are still many things a missionary has to do—or, for that matter, any European in India who is in contact with the people of the country and does not live aloof in a position of artificial seclusion or officialdom.

One day I found a violent quarrel going on between two of the orderlies. They were looking very black at each other, and threatening mutual law-suits. (The chief hobby, it may be remarked, of the people of South India appears to be litigation.) Knowing that these law-suits continue for years and end—if they ever do end—with two families and all their ramifications at deadly enmity, I suggested that they had better not have a “case” about it, but take their shirts off and fight it out there and then, shaking hands afterwards and continuing friends. This was a new idea, being quite un-Indian, but my counsels prevailed. They went out, scowling, to prepare for mortal combat, outside the operating-theatre. But when the time came, they would not fight. Each was afraid of striking the first blow and thereby laying himself open to a charge of assault. They just stood and scowled. “Well,” I said, “aren’t you going to fight?” “No,” they both replied sullenly. “Then,” I continued, “shake hands and be friends.” Sheepishly they approached each other, and slowly shook hands. “Don’t be afraid,” I said. “Shaking hands is not an Indian custom—but it’s a sign of friendship, and a very good custom really, though it *does* come from England.” They parted fairly amicably, and have since been quite good friends. Both are still—thirteen years later—among the best workers in the Mission.

Writing this in 1936, with the hospital staffed by over fifty Indian nurses, both men and women, many of them well educated, very efficient and trustworthy, it seems like a dream (and not too good a one at that) to recall the nursing staff at Neyyoor as it was in 1923. For several years previously there had been no European Nursing Superintendent at Neyyoor, and the nursing profession was

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considered by Indians to be a disgraceful one, fit only for the lowest of outcasts. In consequence, it had been found impossible to obtain a really good class of nurse of either sex. Miss Hacker, who came out to India at the same time as I did, found that she had a rough row to hoe. On the male side there were only five orderlies—one excellent one who is with us still, but the other four of very inferior quality. One was usually drunk, and was dismissed soon afterwards. Another, though not too bad as a nurse, was rather too good as a temporary husband, and ran a number of establishments in the surrounding villages, in each of which was a lady euphemistically described by one of our Indian doctors as "one of ——'s concubines." This middle-aged Lothario used to write turgid hymns in Tamil whenever any occasion required a mild and pious celebration. He didn't last long as a Mission employee.

Then there was another who had to leave hurriedly because the police took him off to jail for debt, and a bright young spark, appointed in his place, disappeared one day with several umbrellas belonging to various patients. The star turn, however, was the son-in-law of our old peon (who kept the out-patients in order and did odd jobs about the hospital). My first encounter with this youth was for the purpose of reprimanding him for the crime—not unprovoked, I suspect—of breaking his father-in-law's arm in the course of an argument. We were very patient with this disorderly orderly, and gave him many chances, for he was an orphan and had a wife and children; but after the proverbial number of seventy times seven had been exceeded, we simply had to dismiss him, taking two of his children into our orphanage to preserve them from an even worse fate than that of having him as a father.

Miss Hacker engaged several new orderlies, some of whom are still with us, and who are among the most efficient. One in particular is a born comedian and greases the wheels of routine continually by finding a ludicrous side to every

## A MISSIONARY'S JOB

contretemps. He plays the part of buffoon in all the hospital staff's theatrical productions, a part which he combines in real life with common sense and efficiency in his work.

There is no doubt that Miss Hacker—although she was only three years with us before a young missionary in another district succumbed to her charms and captured her from us—laid the foundations of a capable and trustworthy nursing service in Neyyoor. But, like most things worth doing, the victory came only after a fight. These combats provided some of the more amusing—if sometimes tragic—incidents of my early months in India.

I had bought a Ford car when I came out, but in those days there was practically nobody in our part of India who knew anything at all about cars, and I had to do everything myself, in the meanwhile training a village boy called Amos to understand the mysteries of internal-combustion engines. He has been my driver and mechanic ever since, and a more faithful soul nobody could wish for.

My great regret ever since I have worked in India has been that I did not spend a year or so doing nothing else but learning the language, before starting medical duties at all. But Dr. Pugh was so over-worked, and the relief of his fatigue was one of the principal considerations that drew me to India; I was anxious to get going at once on hospital work. In consequence, I could spare but two hours a day for Tamil, which is one of the five or six most difficult languages in the world for an Englishman to learn. Though I can now speak Tamil fairly fluently, and often think in it, this has come only slowly. A great deal of utility, a lot of friendship with Indians, and much understanding of their ways and their thought, was lost during the early years of my service, owing to this fault of not having learned the language thoroughly.

If anyone who reads this is intending to become a missionary—that is, anyone sent out from Britain to the East, for commercial, evangelistic, military, administrative,



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medical, or educational purposes—I strongly advise him or her to spend an initial year studying the language thoroughly, learning the local idiom and manner of thought, comparing it if possible with that of other districts in the same part of the country, and, for this purpose, completely neglecting (if it can be managed or arranged) his or her job. In the end it will be found that the job will be done better, that the work will be more enjoyable, that he will not be exposed to trickery and leg-pulling, and that his life will count for far more among people who are understood and friendly, than could ever have been the case had it just been a question of “doing a job” with no particular reference to the people of the country. After all, many of them have got to do his job for him, or, at least, to give support without which the work will be a failure. East is East and West is West, and the twain *can* and *do* meet; but only on terms of friendship, mutual trust, and mutual understanding.

The fact that East and West too often find that the twain can never meet is largely due to the fact that the West usually refuses to take the trouble to get to know the language, thought, and life of the East. Most Britishers in India have yet to find out that they are misunderstanding Indians far more deeply and more frequently than Indians misunderstand them. A great deal of this can be avoided if we but take the trouble to study language, read literature, and generally try to put ourselves in the position of the Indians amongst whom we are living. The longer I remain in India, the more often do I find how unreasonable we Britishers—myself included—are in our judgment of Indians. They have their faults—but so have we. Their faults lie in different directions from ours, but human nature is approximately the same the whole world over. It differs only because environment, custom, religion, and history differ in one nation from another. Only put yourself in the position of the other man—and you will as often as not discover that you would think and do much as

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he does. If we can do this after a few years of service overseas, instead of waiting a decade or two until it becomes possible—how much happier both for East and West, and how much more of our best we can give to the East whilst allowing the East to give of its best to us.

For myself, alas! I had not begun to learn this in the midst of my Jack-of-all-trades doings in Travancore, when the time drew near for me to leave it and go once more to Tibet and Everest. Thither for a while I ask the reader to accompany me—on the Third Everest Expedition.

## CHAPTER XV

### WE START FOR EVEREST AGAIN

IN FEBRUARY 1924, I LEFT NEYYOOR AND ALL MY NEW attachments in India—including poor Pugh, who had to carry on single-handed again until my return—and took the train to Darjeeling.

On the way, I halted at Madras and stayed for a few days with my sister and her husband in order to act as godfather to their second child. At the christening there was an amusing conversation. I looked up the service and discovered that I had to renounce, in the name of the child, the devil and all his works. "How can I do that?" I asked the parson. "How can I promise that this little baby will deprive himself of many pleasures of life when I haven't the least idea whether he will wish to do so when he is grown up?" "Oh, you just say 'Yes'—it's a matter of form, you know!" Typical of the Church! Yet the parson who said that was a good chap and a cut above many others I have known. When is the Church going to face realities and be straight with life? So long as the Christian religion is "a matter of form, you know," so long will it be inept and powerless to deal with human beings and their problems and to produce in them character and worth, which, after all, is its primary object.

On arrival in Darjeeling, I met the splendid band of men who formed the Third Everest Expedition. I don't believe that a similar exploring party has ever been got together with fewer snags and incompatibilities. To quote from a letter to my brother, written a few weeks later from the Base Camp near Everest:

"We're not, as you might suppose, getting fed up

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with each other, though we may find out weak points here and there. Norton is a clinker—one of the nicest chaps who ever was—I can't find a fault. Mallory, though a schoolmaster, is able to lay aside the didactic manner of that profession, and is a very real friend of mine with much the same interests and outlook on life. Odell is very nice, slow, tidy, particular, though a stout fellow, and when he is put to it, he'll make good, I'm sure. Beetham you know—one of the best, but too apt to run away with his health. He has had bad sciatica, but simply will not rest, as he hates the idea of being a crock, which is rather natural; he is probably the fittest and most 'likely' of the lot of us. Hingston is Irish, and typical. Very keen on birds, and on nature in general, and being my tent-companion I have every chance of seeing his weak points as well as his good ones, and I must say he wears very well. Hazard has built a psychological wall round himself, inside which he lives. Occasionally he bursts out of this with a 'By Gad, this is fine!'—for he enjoys (inside the wall) every minute of the Tibetan travel, and even hardship. Then the shell closes, to let nothing in. Geoffrey Bruce is the strongest personality in the camp. He is the most essential member of the whole Expedition. Some people seem to know naturally what is the right thing to do, others have the ability to make others do what they think ought to be done. Geoffrey is one of the few people I know who combines these two qualities. He knows exactly how to get the best out of the porters, and does it with strength combined with kindness. Irvine, our blue-eyed boy from Oxford, is much younger than any of us, and is really a very good sort; neither bump-tious by virtue of his 'blue,' nor squashed by the age of the rest of us. Mild but strong, full of common sense, good at gadgets (none of the oxygen apparatus would have worked if it were not for him, all the tubes being of porous brass which he has rendered non-porous with solder, etc.). If ever a primus-stove goes wrong, it goes straight to Irvine, whose tent is like a tinker's shop. He's thoroughly a man (or boy) of the world, yet with high ideals, and very decent with the porters.

## AFTER EVEREST

"Then there is Shebbeare, our transport officer. He also is a bit of a naturalist, and writes charming picture-letters to his kid at home, with really good drawings of birds and beasts. He has little interest in mountaineering, and is therefore quite happy doing coolies and loads at the base. A real good sort ; he'd never let you down, and gets on very well with us all."

In this letter there is no mention of General Bruce, for he was unfortunate enough to get malaria only a few days after we left Darjeeling, and was not with us when the letter was written. But his cheery manner, and his delightful ways with the porters, have already been mentioned, and all the world knows what an attractive personality is his. The malaria which deprived us of his leadership would have been disastrous to the Expedition if it were not that his mantle fell upon Norton, who was just about the best man that could be found to wear it. He was humble enough to ask our advice freely, especially as regards the climbing of the mountain, sensible enough to know when to take it, strong enough to see that what he decided upon was done, and splendid with the porters—a born leader of men, whether fellow-Britishers or Nepalese or Tibetans.

In many respects, this, my second expedition to Everest, was very like the one of 1922. In one way, however, it was, for me, very different. During the previous expedition, the country and its people, their habits, buildings, and landscape were all completely new to me. In fact, the East itself was new, and full of surprises. During this later expedition, the novelty was no longer there, but I was, in compensation for this, able to bring to what I saw the more balanced vision of one who had begun to make the East his home, and to love it quite definitely.

It will be a relief for the reader if the description of this expedition is taken largely from the Diary which I wrote on the spot. So here goes :

## WE START FOR EVEREST AGAIN

*March 21st, 1924. At Darjeeling.*

Norton and I spent the whole day going laboriously through the provisions. These are much better than last year—and they were pretty good then—and the tents and things are better also. So what we want now is good weather and no avalanches, and then—Union Jack on the summit? We shall see.

We were entertained at the hotel in the evening by some Americans who told us an amusing story against themselves. Lord Balfour was taken to the top of the Woolworth Building soon after its completion. His cicerone told him about its height, wonder, and greatness. Finally, one of the party added: "And believe me, sir, it's absolutely fireproof; impossible to burn down." "What a pity!" sighed Balfour.

I had borrowed from the Medical College at Calcutta an apparatus for analysing the gases expired from the lungs, and tested this with various members of the Expedition at Darjeeling. It seemed to work all right.

So all is going well, and Darjeeling is as jolly as ever.

*March 24th.*—Started off in a car, and Mallory and I then walked together down the steep hill to Tista Bridge, taking short cuts when we could, and getting hotter and hotter as we approached the sultry and rather squalid little town with its ramshackle tin-roofed gin-shop and its tumble-down booths where the least attractive specimens of these usually charming hill-men sell their mixtures of Tibetan food and cheap Japanese enamelled iron. Then over the river, and at the bridge I picked up a hireling pony; what a screw! On the way up the steep hill to Kalimpong my pony tried to lie down and give up the ghost several times. It was, however, only a hireling; and I interviewed some jolly little Tibetan ponies to-day at Kalimpong, and fixed on the likeliest—young, ill-kept, and therefore cheap; but good food will make him all right, I think.

*March 27th.*—Left Kalimpong, breakfasting with Graham

## AFTER EVEREST

on the way, after seeing his school and its boys and girls ; General Bruce gave the scouts a message from Baden-Powell, and they in their turn gave us a short farewell service of God-speed along the way. I suppose this place shares with Miss Carmichael's work at Dohnavur the honour of being the best mission institution in the whole of India.

My new horse is Ar ; very different from the Tista-Kalimpong hireling which tried to die.

*March 28th.*—Down 2,000 feet to the Rongpo Chu, where we bathed for at least an hour. Most delicious water, with good rocks for diving, Noel taking pictures the while for Pathé's Gazette, in which the graceful aquatic sports of Beetham and myself will doubtless draw crowded houses. . . .

Up again to Ari, and down to Rongli, where we spent the night in a dak bungalow. Just asleep when an unearthly yelling made me think that a leopard must have caught somebody. But it was only two of our men, drunk. No. 1 had knocked over a mug of chang (native beer) which belonged to No. 2. No. 2 bit No. 1, taking off a perfectly good finger-nail. No. 1 retaliated with a terrific blow with a piece of wood ; five or six stitches, after a good clean up, were necessary.

*March 30th.*—The finest of all our forest marches. Two thousand feet up from Sedongchen through forest ; then a flat bit, followed by a tremendous long hill—4,000 feet or more—up scrubby ground with wind-blown, picturesque trees, to a little tea-shop where at 12,000 feet most excellent tea, English style, is dispensed by a fair Tibetan maid with an engaging smile, and cleaner than most. Wonderful views of the mountains of Bhutan which I sketched in pastel—one of my better efforts, but who could help it with such a beautiful subject ?

Finally arrived at Gnatong, a desolate village, half buried in slushy snow ; but a good dak bungalow.

At sick parade here, No. 1 of March 28th came up for

## WE START FOR EVEREST AGAIN

his finger to be dressed. Asked him to bring a cup of hot water to soak the dressing off; No. 2 at once rushed off and brought the cup for his quondam enemy. These delightful hill people never nurse a grievance. They may get a bit nasty in a brawl if liquored-up; but once sober, they bear no ill-will, and No. 2, with a terrific gash on the head, can be seen daily doing all he can, with a tenderness and gentle touch you would hardly credit, to heal the hand that tried to brain him.

No. 2's name was Chettan, anglicized to Satan, one of the best-known porters in the country, and one who was faithful unto death on Kangchenjanga. He went with me on three Himalayan expeditions, and was a splendid chap in many ways.

*March 31st. Gnatong-Jelep La.*

What a glorious morning! A fine view of the complete Kangchenjanga range, clear and orange-white in the morning sun. Over the snowy, 17,000-foot pass, the Jelep La, with a superb view of Chomolhari, forty miles away.

Down to a quaint and primitive Tibetan bungalow, where we left a whisky bottle filled with cold tea, with a note saying that we had too much and that this was left over. The second party completely fell, having not realized that it was

*April 1st.*—They dished it out all round before they discovered its true nature!

*April 2nd.*—At Yatung, the first real town in Tibet. Party at the Macdonalds' house (British Trade Agent) with a fine entertainment in the form of Tibetan dancing. I got a number of native tunes which I hope will duly impress the West End in Noel's film music.

*April 3rd.*—Passed a new, very posh-looking Tibetan building, which they said was the new Mint. Owing to embezzling, the coinage has been changed from silver to copper, with the awful result that we have to take with us ten mules laden with 75,000 copper coins, the money



## AFTER EVEREST

for our expenses in Tibet. In 1922 three mules sufficed for our (silver) requirements.

*April 5th.*—At Phari Dzong, said to be the highest (and dirtiest) town in the world, with streets 4 feet deep in a mixture of dung and snow, and houses where live men, women, children, hens, pigs, yaks, and insects all mixed up together. Very homey! Spent the day analysing air from lungs of expedition members, as a control for later experiments.

General Bruce not feeling up to the mark; fever, and he doesn't look fit.

My pony looks like a scarecrow, but being used to these altitudes will probably outlast the sleeker Darjeeling ones.

*April 5th.*—Mallory, Odell, and I walked up into the recesses of Chomolhari, one of the world's most beautiful peaks; disappointingly misty day.

*April 9th.*—Very long march over three passes of 17,000 feet. Sketched Chomolhari again, but paint froze so hard that I gave it up. Temperature — 2° F. at night in camp. Got a telegram, only three days from Kendal (England). Makes one feel quite near home.

*April 11th.*—Over a pass, with glorious views of the Sikhim Himalaya, my old friends of 1922, but looking tame and rounded on this, their easy side; to Kampa Dzong. It was nice to see it again, a lovely mediæval fortress, nobody knows how many hundreds of years old. One of the most beautiful, and I suppose quite the most romantic structure of its size in the world. Lovely old, strong, thick walls of stone, with the floors connected with the most awful Heath Robinson ladders—no stairs. Magnificent view of Everest from the top (looks easy!), and Makalu (impossible). The head man took us into his sacred room, dark and foreboding, only 12 feet by 6 feet, where we drank chang and looked at all his household gods, small images of the Dalai Lamas for centuries, with a lot of character in their faces and of exquisite workmanship.

On returning to camp, we heard that General Bruce

## WE START FOR EVEREST AGAIN

will be unable to come with us, but will have to return to Darjeeling. A great blow to us all ; and especially to me, as Hingston is with him and can't join us for weeks—so I have to do the medical job—a beastly nuisance, but can't be helped.

*April 15th.*—Beautiful march ; lovely colours over the Tibetan plain with its rocky hills of all hues—reds, greys, greens, yellows, and sometimes almost blacks. But all the time we are harassed by “dust-devils” raised by the little whirlwinds, which fill one's nose, ears, neck, pockets, and (if at a meal) one's food with sand.

Arrived at Linga ; a Tibetan complained of toothache in a decayed wisdom tooth. No forceps. I drew the tooth with a pair of footprint pincers, which (though I say it as shouldn't !) is rather a feat. Another Tibetan patient asked me if I had a pill which would make his loud and rasping voice as soft and gentle as a woman's !

*April 17th.*—At Tinki Dzong. Went to a meal with the Dzongpen, including the usual mutton broth eaten with chopsticks ; we are getting rather good at this by now. They don't let you off with less than eight or ten bowls of soup per meal, and this is the fourth or fifth meal we have had.

An evening spent teaching porters how to use rope, ice-axe, etc., on rocks and sandy slopes near the camp.

*April 19th.*—Down the valley from Khanga for ten miles. No incident worth recording except a good gallop for the last two miles, I having walked the other eight, to let a sick coolie have my horse. It is very funny the way these chaps judge one. If one walks in order to let a coolie ride, one goes down in their estimation at once, as they think a sahib with a horse who doesn't ride it himself must be a fool. I have noticed that when I do this for a day's march, I invariably get helped last at the evening meal, as being inferior to the other sahibs who have ridden. So to-day I made the sick man ride “at heel” like a dog, thus being able to help him on without losing dignity !

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*April 22nd. Trangso-chumbab to Kyishong.*

Five or six miles walking with Mallory, discussing modern art, and the possibility of getting back to India quickly after the mountain is finished with. Then five miles of grassy valley good for riding, past a decayed town with only a few walls standing, but showing evidence of having been a large city a thousand—or more—years ago, or whenever it flourished.

*April 23rd.*—To Shekar Dzong, the largest town and monastery hereabouts, with wonderful buildings, all very solid, and evidence of a very definite civilization. In the temple they let us visit the holy of holies, with a colossal Buddha hewn out of the rock and overlaid with gold. I was allowed to sketch this, and Noel to photograph it. The library of the monastery occupies many cubic feet, as all the books are written on wooden leaves, each a quarter to half an inch thick. Experts have reported that they all contain temple orders of service, but no history.

As far as we can make out, Tibet has no history recorded, and, just as in India, its absence is not felt, for the difference between legend and history (or for that matter, truth and falsehood or fiction) is simply not realized. I have heard that there is some recorded history of Tibet about a thousand years ago, but that it stops suddenly, and the large gap thereafter has to be filled from guesswork, from buildings, pictures in monasteries, etc.

The lamas were very friendly and let us go without drinking tea, which was a mercy. We finally passed through a large hall, very dark like the rest, and smelling of rancid butter and dirt in general, hung with many beautiful old banners, and, in places, with cylindrical things of silk and brocade, a cross between a petticoat and a lamp-shade, which we were informed were the clothes of gods. The gods live inside them when invoked by ceremonial to do so, and this idea is perhaps the most picturesque and the most spiritual of all the hotch-potch of

## WE START FOR EVEREST AGAIN

ideas which make up the extraordinary mixture of devotion, sham, superstition, faith, and hanky-panky which forms Lamaism, the religion of Tibet.

*April 26th.*—Over the Pang La pass, where we stopped for two hours to have a real good look at Everest with the big telescope. A dead-clear day and ideal for scrutinizing the mountain. We fixed all sorts of sites for high camps, and decided on several ways up the mountain, on which (at forty miles) we could see almost every stone, so clear was it. The amazing transparency of the atmosphere is one of the characteristics of this part of the globe. People at home will say my sketches are hard, lacking poetry or mystery—but that is just where they are true (in spite of other faults) as records of this extraordinary clarity.

*April 28th.*—To Rongbuk. Glorious morning. I got up early and started ahead of the others in order to go up the Gyachung Chu valley, which no European had as yet entered, and sketch the fine mountain, Gyachung Kang. It is a magnificent peak, with precipices far steeper than Everest.<sup>1</sup> Had a solitary walk up this desolate and tremendous gorge, all sandy-yellow until you reach the rocky part where are the usual many-hued cliffs, culminating in the immense overhanging slab—probably 4,000 feet high—on the north-east face of Gyachung Kang. It must be the largest actual overhang in the world, in all probability. Practically the whole of the north-east face of the mountain is one great slab between the levels of 20,000 and 24,000 feet, almost exactly vertical but with a very slight tilt beyond the perpendicular, very impressive to see, but not conducive to the sense of stability and satisfaction that a mountain view ought to give. ,

After half a day of solitary communing with nature, I went down for my horse and carried on up the Rongbuk valley to join the main body, whom I found settling in near the big monastery, in a beastly wind, very cold. I

<sup>1</sup> Illustration in *The Fight for Everest*, p. 290, is from the sketch just mentioned.

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went to a service at the monastery—a dark, dingy little chapel 10 feet high with three enormous effigies of lamas at one end, and the monks on benches each with either a drum or a clarinet or big trumpet, or else a prayer-book of wood.

Chanting of prayers alternated with musical interludes, and the whole gave one exactly the impression of a Roman Catholic service, with almost every essential precisely the same: chanting in a tongue not understood by the people (Sanskrit), rosaries, bells ringing at special moments, images of beautiful workmanship covered with tawdry robes, incense, lamps in the chancel—in fact, everything except an altar. It is curious that when man makes a religion for himself, in whatever part of the world, he always tends to move in the same direction. The above description of a service, with little alterations, would fit not only a R.C. service and a Lama-ist worship, but many Hindu services, some in the “higher” end of the Church of England; in short, East and West are not so far apart as some people think, and human nature, with its craving for magic and ritual, its acceptance of priestcraft and the appurtenances thereof, is the same the whole world over.

*April 29th.*—A miserable, cloudy, windy day of blizzards. We trekked up to the old Base Camp site, and spent the afternoon sorting out loads of food, etc., for porters and Tibetan coolies to take up to-morrow, for we are wasting no time, and as we know where the upper camps are to be we can get them going at once. Tiring day. Thankful to get into bed at night. Temp. 10° F.

*April 30th.*—Another fine day, spent in sorting boxes again. Hardly a breeze on Everest—why are we not up there to-day? I do hope this sort of weather will last. We have 160 Tibetan coolies for two days, and hope to get Nos. 1 and 2 camps stocked fully with all necessities by May 2nd. After that, our Sherpa and Bhotia porters will have to do all further transport, and we have planned to be ready to climb the mountain on May 17th.

## WE START FOR EVEREST AGAIN

(The following is an extract from a letter written from No. 1 Camp to my parents on May 4th.)

"I have been busy the last few days testing everyone's blood-pressure, pulse, expired air and so on, and often repacking food for the higher camps, so that by now every box of food is marked and ready for its destination, and need not be opened till it gets there.

"I went one or two walks, one very fine climb to a mountain 19,000 feet high (not much, here!) with a glorious view. As I did this in two and a quarter hours from camp (16,500 feet), I think my wind is pretty good. Anyway, here we are setting off for the higher camps on our first attempt to do the climb. We are to have three days' rest at Camp No. 3, and three days at the North Col (23,000 feet) for acclimatization; and on the 16th we hope to launch the attack, Norton and I going without oxygen, Mallory and Irvine *with* it. Whatever the result, you will know it long before you get this letter. Given good weather, I have hopes; but bad weather is so prevalent on the mountain just now that I am a bit apprehensive. Anyway, we'll do our best, and I don't think there is as much danger as two years ago, for we know how to avoid it, and what to avoid, so much better. Two Tibetan women are waiting to take this letter down to the Base, and they smell so strong that I must stop. I'll try and write again from higher up."

## CHAPTER XVI

### CAMPS AND BLIZZARDS

WE WENT UP TO NO. 3 CAMP, AND THERE WE FAIRLY GOT in for it. Norton and I started off from the Base on May 6th, unfortunately without Beetham, who was originally to have been our companion. Poor chap, he had had a sharp attack of sciatica, and found every step to be agony. He was therefore unable to climb the peak with us, but insisted on accompanying us "to give what help he could." It was exceptionally bad luck, not only on him, but on the entire Expedition, for he was perhaps the most likely of all for the summit stakes.

Mallory, Irvine, Odell, and Hazard had left for the higher camps some days previously, but had been severely hampered by blizzards and intense cold—down to  $-21^{\circ}$  F. ( $53^{\circ}$  of frost). Mallory's account of his arrival, alone, in charge of a party of very cold and rather unwilling porters, very late and with no strength left to pitch tents—at the site of No. 3 Camp, is one of the most depressing things I have read.<sup>1</sup> Thus in cold and blizzard began the ill-fated No. 3 Camp. It was a cold so intense that it took the stuffing out of European and Indian alike, and so prolonged that the establishment of this and of all higher camps suffered fatal delay.

As Norton and Beetham and I were waiting at No. 2 Camp on May 8th, Mallory arrived from above a day later than we expected him, and reported the seriousness of the situation at No. 3. I had the job of carrying on there whilst the others restored porters' morale at the warmer No. 2. I had a day of such bad weather—blustery, cold,

<sup>1</sup> *The Fight for Everest*, pp. 228-9.

## CAMPS AND BLIZZARDS

and snowy—that few additions of equipment could be got to No. 3. When on May 9th (the next day) Mallory, Irvine, Norton, and Geoffrey Bruce all arrived there I felt that I gave them a poor welcome. Kami, the cook, was, however, magnificent. It was almost impossible to heat anything even if one could get a primus-stove going in the blizzard, but Kami appeared from time to time with a surrealist mixture of beans, tea, and kerosene oil which he introduced by different names on each appearance, signifying the time of day rather than the nature of the collation. We called it Kami Cha<sup>1</sup> and agreed that if ever we thawed out sufficiently to leave the camp we would erect a monument to Kami before we quitted the scene of his exploits. The great thing about this appalling brew was that it was HOT—and that meant everything in a storm of wind and snow below zero.

There was, of course, not a drop of water at this camp. Every ounce of liquid had to be melted from snow; yet the porters and ourselves all kept alive. But the nourishment we got was really very insufficient. It was largely this first week at No. 3 Camp that reduced our strength and made us—by the time when we finally climbed as far as we could, three weeks later—thin and weak and almost invalided, instead of being fit and strong as we had been during the 1922 ascent. Life at No. 3 during the six days I was there was certainly most unpleasant. The fine powdery snow blew into everything, tent, sleeping-bags, and even down one's neck. Each time we stirred at night we would disturb a fresh pile of snow somewhere in the tent and the wind would scatter it all over our faces. When there was a job of work to be done by the porters, they were continually reporting sick. It often required great patience and good humour to rouse them to any sort of action. They are very dependent on the weather. Given a fine day, we never experienced any trouble in getting them going. But that week at No. 3, with its cold and blizzards,

<sup>1</sup> Cha = tea in Hindi.



## AFTER EVEREST

seemed to render the stoutest among them inactive. All the more credit, then, must go to Kami, so faithfully regular with his fearful concoctions.

One day during this week, Mallory, Norton, and Odell made a route up the North Col, keeping to the right (north) of the place where we had had the fatal avalanche of 1922, up easier and gentler slopes at first, but gaining height later in a formidable ice chimney, the bottom part of which was so steep that a rope-ladder had to be fixed there. The initial climbing of this chimney was a brilliant bit of work on the part of the three, and the rope-ladder made the place much safer for the porters and all of us.

The Diary—not written during the blizzards—again resumes the story:

*May 19th.*—The new way is quite safe from avalanche, but much more difficult for porters, and all coolie parties must be escorted by a sahib, which is a nuisance.

*May 20th.*—A beastly snowy day; little could be done, except to kick steps in the snow ready for

*May 21st.*—Irvine, Hazard, and I escorted the first party of porters—twelve of them—to the North Col. It was wild and stormy, with showers of light, powdery snow which obliterated all the tracks of May 20th. So we had to make all the steps anew, a gruelling job in the fresh snow after one's initial energy has worn off a bit. The ice chimney was a bit of a snag, for Irvine and I, sweating blood, had to haul all the twelve loads up it with a rope. Irvine's a stout and hefty lad at this sort of job. It took over two and a half hours to get the loads up, then the porters had to come up on a fixed rope. I thought it seemed a bit gutless to go back, so decided to push forward and was pleased to discover the porters were quite keen. Hazard and they went up to the Col and made the camp. Irvine and I turned back near the top, having seen them through all possible danger. By our turning back a few meals and things will be saved, with the carrying involved. We got down tired but quite fit, well after dark.

## CAMPS AND BLIZZARDS

*May 22nd.*—Awful day. The party we hoped to bring up the North Col to complete its equipment couldn't even start. No. 3 was hell—I think the thirteen of them on the North Col are more comfortable than we are. But this new snow is making the way up to them very dangerous. We hope to send another party up to-morrow; but it's not too safe on the slopes of the Col.

*May 23rd.*—Geoffrey Bruce and Odell started with fourteen porters. Cloudy day; a good deal of fresh snow from yesterday. They found the going so bad that they had to dump all loads below the ice chimney and return to No. 3. Meanwhile Hazard seems to be coming down the Col with his coolies—the best thing to do, as a bit more snow would have marooned them and it would have been a proper mess-up. Later—Hazard arrived with only eight coolies—that means four of them are still up there—we all felt it a great mistake to leave anyone behind; either all or none should have come down.

*May 24th.*—The continued presence of the four marooned porters necessitates action; we had to take this to-day. Norton, Mallory, and I started off at 8 a.m. from No. 3, and had luckily a nice day for our rather hazardous undertaking. So much new snow has fallen—we felt avalanches imminent almost everywhere. With much labour we got up in seven hours—last year it never took more than four at its worst—and came to the bottom of the last steep slope. Norton and Mallory made themselves secure behind a firm sérac (ice-tower) and I went on alone, tied to our longest rope, going obliquely across the slope to the left, for on this side of the top the four coolies were sitting, anxiously watching the life-line that, in the shape of my rope, was slowly approaching them. The idea was that if an avalanche occurred Norton and Mallory would have held me; in theory at any rate it was sound. I got on all right to within 20 feet of the top, where the rope gave out. So I untied, and fixed the end of the rope to my axe, which I put into firm snow. I told the

## AFTER EVEREST

four porters to get right above me, and then make their way vertically down to me, so that if there was a slip I could catch them. In natural, but disastrous impatience, two of them started coming down to me from over on my left, entirely unsafeguarded, and the worst happened. The two slipped, started a small avalanche of snow, and, I thought, were going to go down, to certain death. By the grace of God, they stopped at a place which I thought I could just reach. I chaffed them and said cheerio (as well as I could in their not too familiar tongue) to prevent wind-up and struggles which might lead to further disaster. I told them to remain perfectly still. Norton and Co. were able to give me about 15 feet more rope, and by tying the end to my right wrist and moving the ice-axe a bit, belaying the rope round it as a safeguard, I was just able to reach the two offenders with my left hand and shepherd them one by one to the place where the axe was. There they were safe (if any of us were, which is doubtful), and using the rope as a hand-rail they finally reached Norton and Mallory, where there was real safety. The other two porters were wiser and did as I told them, reaching me and the rope without mishap. But the whole thing was pretty well touch and go, and you can imagine my relief when the last of the four coolies was in the arms of Norton, and I was going back along the tracks with the 250-foot rope getting shorter and shorter as I proceeded. Once we had forgathered, it was a question of time, and not of danger, to get home to No. 3 Camp. One of the chaps got both hands badly frostbitten, but there were no other mishaps. But it was all tough work in the thick, deep snow, and we were very, very tired when Odell and Noel met us with hot soup on the glacier. Thus encouraged, we reached camp at 8 p.m. Apart from the danger, it was a gruelling day and took the stuffing out of us, for we all had hard work, especially in the kicking of steps in the new snow, which was always a foot deep, and sometimes up to the waist.

## CAMPS AND BLIZZARDS

*May 25th.*—A bad day, but good enough for a retreat. With all this deep snow, going is too heavy and too dangerous for the actual climbing of the mountain to be possible, so we are making a modified retreat, not to the Base, but to No. 2 or No. 1 where it is warmer. Dealt with two cases of frostbite, one very bad, before sending them to the Base. Very good dinner in No. 2 Camp, a treat after Kami Cha.

*May 26th.*—Council of war, seven of us. Decided that we must go for the smallest possible bandobast,<sup>1</sup> as these armies of porters are no use in dangerous conditions, witness the disaster in 1922 when we had a cavalcade of seventeen. So we have arranged to go up to-morrow to Camp No. 3, next day the North Col. Mallory and Geoff. Bruce are the two fittest at present (I have a beastly sore throat and cough since May 24th, probably frostbite of the lining of my throat). So M. and B. start with five porters, make a camp at 25,000 feet, and sleep there. Next day they take a tent on to 27,000 feet, while Norton and I start from the Col to camp (taking one tent with us) at 25,000. The following day, M. and B. hope for the top, Norton and I for 27,000 feet, and Odell and Irvine start to go to 25,000. Sounds all right on paper; it gives us three simple two-camp non-oxygen attempts in succession, and with some possibility of contact between them, and of support, if necessary. Given good weather, this arrangement, I think, offers the best chance of the top.

. . . . .

*May 30th.*—Up we go to No. 3; good weather, very hot on the glacier (and very slippery unless you have crampons). Camp looking much more cheery than when we left it a few days ago. Mallory and Geoffrey are already a day ahead of us, a position which they retain, we hope, until they get to the summit.

*June 1st.*—Up the ice wall of the North Col; glorious

<sup>1</sup> Arrangement, hence cavalcade, or plans in general.

## AFTER EVEREST

weather, the snow settling down into good condition. At last we really seem to have got going, and we hope this time for a shot at the peak itself ; not merely to be continually harassed by blizzards and hurricanes at the foot of the mountain. On arrival at the Camp on top of the Col, where there is great activity and a certain amount of excitement in the air, we heard that Mallory and Geoffrey got going early, and pictured them even then settled in at 25,000 feet in their two little tents. And we make the start to-morrow, after a good night on the comfortable snow, so much softer as a bed than the stones of No. 3 Camp.

## CHAPTER XVII

### WITHIN A THOUSAND FEET OF THE TOP

THE NEXT DAY NORTON AND I STARTED OFF, WITH SIX selected porters carrying loads of bedding, food, and one tent, to replace the things which Mallory and Bruce were taking simultaneously from the 25,000-foot Camp to establish a higher tent. From this the ascent to the top was to be made. That was, of course, the idea; but we were to have a rude shock in an hour or two.

I well remember the intensely cold wind, of which we got the full force soon after leaving No. 4 Camp (the North Col). I tried several times to take a photograph of the wonderful early-morning view, but could only expose my bare hand to the wind for a second or two at a time. The first time the gloves were off I got the camera opened but could not press the shutter-release. Gloves on again; hands warmed up, and another shot at it—no good; hands won't work. The third attempt was successful and produced a photograph of the north-west shoulder of Everest, with the shadow of the North Peak on the glacier below.

After that we slogged on, taking turns to kick steps in the snowy shoulder of our peak. No incident occurred until we heard voices above us, and saw to our dismay that Mallory and Geoffrey Bruce were coming down the mountain. They had pitched their camp at 25,000 feet, and slept in it; but, alas! in the morning one of the porters was sick, and even the persuasive powers of Geoffrey had failed to move the others. The only thing they could do was to come down, leaving the tents for us, and wishing

## AFTER EVEREST

us better luck with our assault on the mountain. It was a grievous disappointment, and must have been worse for them than for us. The number of attempts on Everest was cut down by one, and it was just possible that Norton and I would have the only chance given to the whole Expedition of climbing to the summit.

The cold wind was not conducive to prolonged conversation, so we soon said a reluctant farewell to Mallory and his party, set our teeth, and pushed on, feeling more than ever that we must do our utmost to get to the top. Higher up on the mountain we knew that the low pressure would take all the stuffing out of us, and give us that "don't care" feeling which, if we didn't look out, would make us give in before we really needed to do so. Besides, would our own porters go sick—or go on? We found the two tents all right, pitched close to the place where we had put them in 1922, and, having with us an extra tent and bedding, we settled down to as near an approach to a comfortable evening as one can expect at 25,000 feet. We kept four porters with us, and sent the remainder down to the North Col—it is lucky that this snowy shoulder is so easy a place that unsupervised porters can be sent home without danger either to their bodies or to our peace of mind. I can still remember the ghastly night we had at 25,000 feet in 1922; but on this occasion, in spite of our very inferior physical condition—we were not nearly as fit as we had been at this camp two years ago—we had a much better night, due, no doubt, to the more carefully-levelled floor of the tent.

When we got up in the morning, Norton turned on his eloquence for a good long time in attempts to rouse, inspire, enthuse, and, generally speaking, persuade the porters to get a move on. Meanwhile I collected snow and got on with melting it and making some sort of breakfast. At 9 a.m.—four hours after we had got up—we were ready to start. Our start even then was due entirely to one man, Lhakpa Chédi, stoutest-hearted of our porters,

WITHIN A THOUSAND FEET OF THE TOP without whose lead it is probable that the other three would all have refused to go on.

One did hold back; but the others were at last persuaded to come on, although Semchumbi had had his knee cut by a falling stone and it looked a bit sore. I take off my hat to him, and to Narbu Ishay, the other starter; but I make a more profound obeisance to Lhakpa Chédi, a real sportsman with guts. It seemed a sad contrast when I last saw him, a waiter in a Darjeeling café, dispensing ices and creamy cakes to painted and "permed" English ladies.

We struggled up the easy mountain-side, hampered only by our own physical condition and by poor Semchumbi's knee, but most of all by the atmosphere. Norton and two porters went on in front, while I helped Semchumbi by carrying part of his load—only a few pounds, but hard work. At last we reached the others, where we found the camp site being levelled—at a place with good shelter behind a rock, at a height of 26,800 feet. A bit too low, but still—we had done 2,000 feet a day with ease up to now; and there was little more than 2,000 feet left for the morrow.

The three stout fellows who had got our stuff—tent, bedding, and food, nearly 50 lb. in all—up to this height, and without whose aid we would have been at that moment retreating, were sent down to Camp 4 with a note describing their prowess and suggesting reward by suitable gastronomic methods. Norton and I settled down to melt snow for to-night's supper and to-morrow's breakfast, looking out from time to time at our porters bucketing down the mountain-side, and far beyond them at a sunset all over the world, as it seemed—from the rosy fingers of Kangchenjunga in the east, past the far-distant peaks of mid-Tibet, separated from us by several complete ranges of mountains, to Gaurisankar and its satellites in the west, black against the red sky. I remember a curious sensation while up at this camp, as if we were getting near the edge



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of a field with a wall all round it—a high, insuperable wall. The field was human capacity, the wall human limitations. The field, I remember, was a bright and uniform green, and we were walking towards the edge—very near the edge now, where the whitish-grey wall said: “Thus far, and no farther.” This almost concrete sense of being near the limit of endurance was new to me, and though I have often felt the presence of a Companion on the mountains who is not in our earthly party of climbers, I have only on this single occasion had this definite vision of limitation. With it I went to sleep, and slept remarkably well, though I woke up at five with my extremely sore throat even worse than before, and with the unwelcome announcement by Norton that the cork had come out of the thermos flask and there was nothing for it but to melt some more snow and make more coffee.

So it was twenty to seven before we started, taking with us a few cardigans, a thermos flask of coffee and a vest-pocket Kodak: nothing else save ice-axes and a short rope.

The ground over which we started was easy but trying; scree, which slipped while we were trying to mount it, and rocks, which provided simple scrambling. It was intensely cold, but ahead of us we saw a patch of sunlight, and strained every nerve to reach this and get warm. There was one broad patch of snow across which Norton chipped steps, and once over this the slippery scree ended and we climbed for the rest of the day on rocks—easy rocks, though all the ledges sloped outwards and many of them were covered with small stones which made one feel rather insecure. The sun, however, was kind to us, and cheered us on our way. Even the wind was not so bad as it had been the day before. We had, in fact, the best possible weather conditions; if only we had not started on our climb already a couple of invalids, emaciated and enfeebled by the bad weather of the last few weeks.

About 700 or 800 feet above our camp the effects of

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height seemed to assert themselves quite suddenly. From going 300 feet or so of vertical height in an hour, we suddenly found ourselves cut down to little more than 100. From taking three or four breaths to a step we were reduced to having to take ten or more. Even then we had to stop at frequent intervals to get our breath. As Norton said in the account he wrote afterwards: "Every five or ten minutes we had to sit down for a minute or two, and we must have looked a sorry couple." The imaginative reader must not picture to himself a couple of stalwarts breasting the tape, but a couple of crocks slowly and breathlessly struggling up, with frequent rests and a lot of puffing and blowing and coughing. Most of the coughing, and probably most of the delay, came from me; Norton was, as ever, infinitely patient, and never so much as suggested that I was keeping him back. Finally, as we approached the level of 28,000 feet, the summit being only half a mile away or less, I felt that, as far as I was concerned, it was hopeless to continue. I told Norton that he had no chance of the summit with me. My throat was not only extremely painful, but was getting almost blocked up—why, I knew not. So, finding a suitable ledge on which to sit in the sun and pull myself together, I told Norton to go on. If the remainder of the mountain were as easy in general angle as what we had already done, there was no particular danger in climbing it alone; we two had not yet used the rope at all.

So, at 28,000 feet, I sat down and watched Norton go on. But he, too, was not far from the limit of his endurance, and after proceeding for some distance horizontally, but not a hundred feet in vertical height above me, he stopped in the big couloir, looked at the rocks around its top (which are rather steeper than we had thought) and turned back. Soon he was shouting to me to come on and bring a rope, as he was beginning to be snow-blind and could not see where to put his feet. So I went on and joined him, not forgetting to put a specimen of the rock

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from our highest point in my pocket. We roped up. Norton went down first and myself last, ready to hold him if at any time he slipped owing to his failing eyesight.

We sat down for a bit and worked out our chances of reaching the top—900 feet above us, nine hours of climbing at our present rate, including the difficult bit that was just above Norton when he was at his nearest point to the summit, where two climbers, properly roped up, were essential for success and safety. Obviously, we could not get up to the top before midnight, and we realized that, in the moonless night which almost certainly required a few stops to find the way down, that meant almost certain death by freezing. We had been willing always to risk our lives, but we did not believe in throwing them away, so we decided that we must go down the mountain and own ourselves beaten in fair fight. No fresh snow, no blizzards, no intense cold had driven us off the peak. We were just two frail mortals, and the biggest task Nature has yet set to man was too much for us. Moving slowly and resting frequently, and so far from normal that for the first time in my climbing experience I dropped my ice-axe, we carefully retraced our steps down the rocky ledges, Norton, in spite of his eyes, making no mistake nor slip.

One thing we had plenty of time to survey, and that was the view. In its extent it was, of course, magnificent. Great peaks that had towered over us with their impressive and snow-clad heads a week ago were now but so many waves on the ocean of mountains below us. Except for Everest itself there was nothing within view so high as we were ourselves. The colossal bastion of Cho Uyo and Gyachung Kang was a wall over which we could see the low limestone hills of Tibet, and far away in the distance beyond them a few snowy summits, maybe 200 miles away. Mountain peaks are nearly always at their best when one is below their level: but whilst they lose their individual glory when seen from above, there

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is an exhilaration about a view of tremendous extent such as was ours that day.

In a country which has the clearest atmosphere in the world, we were lucky in being up on Everest on an exceptionally clear day. We simply saw everything there *was* to see ; the experience of a lifetime, but quite indescribable. At so great a height, one's psychical faculties are dulled, and, just as this amazing extent of landscape failed to give us its full impressiveness, so, when we turned from it to descend, we had but little feeling of disappointment that we could not go on. We realized that it would be madness to continue, and we were somehow quite content to leave it at that, and to turn down with almost a feeling of relief that our worst trials were over.

We called at our camp, and took away a tent-pole as a substitute for my axe. Below this, the going was easier, so we unroped. Alas, that we did so ! Somewhere about 25,000 feet high, when darkness was gathering, I had one of my fits of coughing and dislodged something in my throat which stuck so that I could breathe neither in nor out. I could not, of course, make a sign to Norton, or stop him, for the rope was off now ; so I sat in the snow to die whilst he walked on, little knowing that his companion was awaiting the end only a few yards behind him. I made one or two attempts to breathe, but nothing happened. Finally, I pressed my chest with both hands, gave one last almighty push—and the obstruction came up.<sup>1</sup> What a relief ! Coughing up a little blood, I once more breathed really freely—more freely than I had done for some days. Though the pain was intense, yet I was a new man, and was soon going down at a better pace than ever to rejoin Norton. He had thought I was hanging back to make a sketch before the light went completely, and fortunately had not been worried. Shuffling along in the

<sup>1</sup> Note for medical readers : This obstruction was a slough of the mucous membrane lining the larynx, due to frostbite owing to the rapid inhalation of very cold air for so many hours a day.

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dark with the aid of an electric torch, we at last got into touch with No. 4 Camp, for Mallory and Odell came out to meet us. Though the oxygen they carried for our use was a kind thought, it was not what we wanted at all; but the news they brought of Irvine in the camp below brewing hot tea and soup cheered us up and brought us home in good temper. What a contrast to our arrival in the same camp two years before, with Morshead not far from dying, and no food nor drink for us, nor any living soul nearer than Camp 3. This time we entered the camp soon after nine, and within an hour were warmed and fed and asleep.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### DISASTER—AND RETREAT

THE NEXT MORNING, POOR NORTON HAD GOT SNOW-BLINDNESS pretty badly, and had to stay where he was, in a tent on the North Col. I was advised to go down if I felt like it, for I was not fit enough to be of much help to anyone, and the obvious place for me was the Base. So down I went in the knowledge that Mallory and Irvine were already making their attempt. And at the Base "Beetham and I are very comfy, living like fighting cocks on the Base-camp luxuries. I am very glad to have two or three days' complete rest, as my throat is still pretty bad and I am far more breathless than at our first arrival here." Obviously, I had got a dilated heart, as most climbers on Everest do after going very high. "I am doing experiments on my blood, etc., to try and see whether I have de-acclimatized." They showed that I had not done this. The heart, not the blood, was at fault, and as it turned out it took two weeks to recover, and then did so quite suddenly one day.

*June 10th.*—Beetham—crippled with sciatica, however stoutly he tries to keep going and to do all he can—is with me, anxiously awaiting news from above. Mallory and Irvine started on the 6th from No. 4 Camp, and will, we hope, have climbed the mountain on the 8th. No news as yet—but weather is not too bad, and it may be that they have done it. We ought to hear to-morrow.

*June 11th.*—No news. It is ominous. A few people have filtered back to the Base, very pessimistic. It is very disappointing to think that Mallory and Irvine may have failed—but they may never come back. They may

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be dead. My friend and fellow-climber, Mallory, one in spirit with me—dead?—I can hardly believe it.

*June 12th.*—They are all arriving at the Base now. No signs of Mallory and Irvine. Odell went up on the 9th to 27,000 feet, and found the tent there empty. There were only two possibilities—accident or benightment. It is terrible. But there are few better deaths than to die in high endeavour, and Everest is the finest cenotaph in the world to a couple of the best of men.

*June 15th.*—What was it—accident, or were they benighted? The latter is almost impossible—there was a bit of a moon, and if they had got up to the top, even late, it is almost impossible that they would not have got back to the Camp, for once off the rocks (which are easy) <sup>1</sup> the last 800 feet towards the Camp is practically a scree-run. Moreover, they were last seen just below the section of the mountain (about 28,200–28,300 feet) where Norton and I saw that the rock was loose and dangerous-looking. Personally, I think it almost certain that they had an accident on this rock, and may have fallen anything from 100 to 10,000 feet. Norton forbade search above 27,000 feet as involving too much risk on what was a hopeless task (for, if they were injured on the 8th, the night would have assuredly frozen them to death, and if killed outright, rescue parties would be useless). I wanted to explore the base of the mountain on this (north) side, but my condition (especially my throat) was not up to it. Hazard has now gone up the glacier and is going to look out for signs of them, but I think he won't find anything. Anyway, they are gone now, for certain, perhaps after having got to the top, perhaps on the way up—nobody will ever know. It is very sad, and a rotten ending to the expedition. Especially do I feel the loss of Mallory, who was a particular friend of mine, and one of the few people on this show with whom one could really talk freely of more serious

<sup>1</sup> Subsequent observations by the party of 1933 proved that some of the rocks above 28,000 feet were distinctly difficult.

## DISASTER—AND RETREAT

things—he had a good knowledge and appreciation of literature, and although highbrow in some things, was always ready to laugh at his own highbrowisms. Moreover, he was a first-rate mountaineer, and the nicest and most patient of companions if one couldn't go quite as fast as his very furious pace uphill. His loss as a friend is made up by the privilege of having known him, and whenever I read the *Spirit of Man*, I shall be reminded of the times, both in 1922 and 1924, when he and I read selections aloud to each other in our little tent at No. 3 Camp. His spirit is indeed the Spirit of a Man.

Odell's bit of work in going up twice to 27,000 feet (once as backing M. and I. up, two days later to search for them) is a very fine performance. I could have done it two years ago, but not this year (I was quite done up after our 28,000-foot effort and am fairly slow-going still, twelve days later).

Directly it was obvious that further waiting or looking for Mallory and Irvine was hopeless, all camps were evacuated and all wanted stuff brought down to the Base. There we are all assembled, and have been very busy. Beetham and I were given the job of building a memorial to all three expeditions, taking the form of a 15-foot cairn on a 5-foot plinth, all of biggish stones, of which there is no dearth in Rongbuk. We carved in stone five panels; the main one Beetham did very well, cutting  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch deep. The other two and a half I did, and one and a half were done by certain skilled coolies (though I had to furbish them up a bit later). We did all the carving and building in two days, very hard work, but I think pukka and well done. I designed all the lettering—very simple—and we cut out the background, leaving the letters. If all else fails, I shall *not* be a monumental mason—a more tedious job I never imagined. But really the memorial looks quite imposing, and will last, I hope, for many years—to greet the next Expedition and tell of the dangers of the mountain.



## AFTER EVEREST

What is the summing up of the whole thing? Well, I think the mountain can be climbed—perhaps it has been. Up to where I have been there is no danger, and you might, but for the associated conditions of air, wind, and possible bad weather, call it easy. Above 28,000 feet there is a zone of about 200 feet of really badly loose rock, where, I believe, the disaster probably occurred. This is the chief danger, as the rock is both loose and steep, and above it again, the mountain is apparently easy to the top. It may be possible to climb it without oxygen, and, if so, another camp at 27,000, or as near as possible, is necessary. Then can—or will—coolies carry to a third high camp? Possibly not, and, if not, the mountain is impossible without oxygen. With oxygen, of course, it is possible, but the very greatest precautions must be taken on the loose rock, and probably a 200-foot rope is desirable.<sup>1</sup>

Then another question—is it worth it? That is for everyone to answer for himself. Meanwhile, I leave them to answer it whilst I, with the main body, go down to a valley to our west, the Rongshar Chu, near Gaurisankar, and try to get rid of my throat trouble in warmer, damper air, before the dry journey back across Tibet. . . .

Can we now answer that question—was it worth it? Did Mallory and Irvine lay down their lives in vain? It is a sad thing that they never returned to tell the tale of endeavour, and possibly of conquest. But nobody can hold that lives lost in fighting Nature's greatest obstacles in the name of adventure and exploration are thrown away. *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*; and surely death in battle against a mountain is a finer and nobler thing than death whilst attempting to kill someone else. The loss of these splendid men is part of the price that has been paid to keep alive the spirit of adventure. . With-

<sup>1</sup> This Diary was written at the time; the Expedition of 1933 have found that the bit of rock in question is not so very loose (which it is in parts), but is very steep; and it is chiefly for this latter reason that it remains the crux of the climb.

## DISASTER—AND RETREAT

out this spirit life would be a poor thing, and progress impossible.

*June 16th.*—Left Rongbuk Monastery after taking leave of the head lama, who was very pleasant and expressed sorrow at the accident and so on. For once no tea-drinking was necessary, and so we got away with good digestions. It was sad to leave the old Rongbuk valley where we had been so long and so apparently unsuccessful, though of course the mountain may have been climbed—nobody will ever know, probably. Down the valley and across a 6-foot bridge over a 30-foot torrent, the latter being 80 feet below the bridge—the only little bit of gorge in the whole Rongbuk valley. Whilst looking at the water below (leading my horse) the horse very nearly knocked me in with his head. I got a “turn” that lasted about two hours; it was a pretty near thing. Then over the Gyachung Chu by a very different bridge on cantilever lines, with three lots of logs, the lateral ones weighted with stones and the middle ones lying across. Then we were on new ground (to all of us) and will be for two or three weeks. We went up to a pass called the Lamna La and camped this (east) side of it. Very fine view of Everest, etc., over the top of a low hill from the camp.

*June 18th.*—We went right up the moraine-covered valley of Kyetrak (leaving south-south-west from Tinki Dzong) as far as Kyetrak village, where we camped. The valley was very dull in itself, but with fine views of (to us) new and delightful peaks on the south and east, which contrived to make it perhaps our most interesting march. I did a (bad) sketch of those to the east, for the sake of topography rather than of art; and one of my best of a fine mountain to the south, which dominates the valley and is a most beautiful shape. Then a storm came on, and I did a small impression of it—very fine subject for a Brangwyn etching—one of the most terrific rainstorms I have seen, or so it seemed, with the white mountain behind it.

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*June 19th.*—Another very interesting march, over the Pusi La pass to the south-west of Kyetrak leading into the Rongshar valley. I was up early and crossed the very rapid Kyetrak stream on my horse, then rode up half-way to the pass before the others got going, as I wanted time for a good sketch. In consequence, I did a very bad one, but of the most glorious mountain view, looking up the Kyetrak glacier with Cho Uyo (26,000) on the left, and Cho Rapsang on the right, and between them three or four very fine peaks. It is impossible to do these snowy peaks in full daylight—one wants morning and evening shadows, and at midday and midsummer there are no shadows at all. Result—fine topographical drawing with no artistic merit at all! Once over the pass, we dropped down into entirely different scenery—a rocky, snowless gorge, cut by the river for 40 or 50 miles through the Gaurisankar group of mountains, the gorge being very fine in its way, though a little monotonous, going for mile after mile through exactly the same sort of country. No vegetation at first, then thin grass, azaleas, berberis, and small shrubs. No view of the big mountains, as the monsoon clouds have thoroughly got going now. Halted at village of Tasam, after very long march.

*June 20th.*—Explored village: very jungly, all built of stones without plaster or mud, except for the roofs; no windows, only a door. I bet the rain comes through the roof. Only juniper and other small trees; no forest trees in sight at all. Down the gorge again; the path very well kept up, but not very safe for horses, so we walked all day. Our forty yaks managed well not to lose any loads, as much of the path is destroyed from time to time by washes out.

*June 21st.*—Still on and on in the gorge, which opened out again and is really fine, though it is disappointing to get no view of any big mountains, especially as we know they are just above us. Irises carpet the ground almost everywhere, and roses of pink and white everywhere else.

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No forest trees, and very few of any sort save roses, small cypress, and a few azaleas.

Passed through a very quaint village—in this rainy place they have a double roof—the usual flat mud one, and above it a sloping roof of wooden planks like Swiss chalets. Two miles beyond the village we crossed the stream, and on its north side there is a subsidiary valley or rather gorge. We found a very sloping but beautiful camp in a natural garden—thousands of irises—little blue ones—and rose-bushes all over the place, leaving little clearings which are just right for our tents. Mine is at an angle which causes me to wake up in the morning nearly off my bed, and my bath this morning was almost a flood in my tent; and hardly any water in the bath. Nevertheless, it got me clean, and it's fine to be clean. Also, I got all my clothes washed, even my two handkerchiefs (all the others I brought have been pinched; coolies seem to love them). It is a change wearing shorts and a shirt after the Rongbuk glacier doings.

*June 25th.*—Norton and I went to a charming camp site 2,000 feet above Trobdje, and took three coolies with us, and two tents—one for us, one for coolies. We found a little green alp with a farmhouse and a few trees, in full view of the clouds which were hiding Gaurisankar. The clouds occasionally parted and were very kind to us, as we got a fairly good view of that most shapely of all peaks during our first evening. But next morning we got a still finer one, and both set to work hard to sketch. Later in the day we went up to a pass of 15,500 feet, and got rather entangled in cypress bushes, having missed the path. We wasted an hour getting out of this 2-feet-high jungle and, finally, by going up the bed of a stream, refound the path. At about 14,000 or more the clouds suddenly cleared and revealed the top of Gaurisankar 45° above our horizon (which was, of course, downhill), and Norton and I agreed that it was the most impressive mountain view either of us had ever seen. Its height above us

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seemed incredible, so much so that when I saw it I felt my balance was wrong and fell over backwards! At the top of the pass we saw nothing but clouds, but on our way down we got the same marvellous view from 14,500 feet, far too wonderful to paint, although I had a go at it. Next morning (June 27th) we got an even better view from our little camp, seeing the whole mountain from the top to its foot in the valley below us—not so impressive as when partly covered by cloud, but still interesting to see the whole thing, and how it was built, so to speak. Altogether a most worth-while little trip, and we came down to Trobdje with about five sketches apiece and the satisfaction of having got a first-class view of what is, I suppose, one of the two or three finest peaks in the world, for several brief minutes.

*June 28th.*—The others returned from their trip down the gorge, and Norton and I felt that we had had the better end of the stick. Next day, Beetham, Geoff., Odell, and I went up to our high camp again, but got no view at all; very disappointing, especially for Beetham, who had his big camera.

On the 30th we all left Trobdje on the way back—much recovered in health for our ten days at a reasonable elevation; my sore throat entirely gone, my breath also much better.

*July 3rd* saw us across the pass (no view) and at Kyatrak, where there is a village, which I am afraid will mean drunken coolies to-morrow. It's very cold here in this bleak spot at the foot of a large glacier, very like our Rongbuk Base Camp. What the people in the village live on, goodness knows.

*July 4th.*—Long march, at first through the big and rather dull Kyatrak valley, with immense moraine heaps on either side (the glacier must have been right down the valley for a very long time, as the moraines are nearly 2,000 feet high in one part, and for the first 5 miles all are over 1,000 feet). Saw a very large herd of Kiang (wild

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ass), some within 50 yards, the only time I have seen them within a quarter of a mile. Had a dog-hunt on horseback with whips—sort of pig-sticking—to teach the local dogs how to behave. We put a little manners into them, which may have saved a bite or two.

*July 5th.*—Sharto-Tingri, 10 miles, all along grassy plain, in itself dull but for the birds, of which we saw teal and other water species, and a new (to me) kind of plover. Tingri is a dirty little town, not so imposing as Khamba or Shekar, but in its way picturesque. I did a futurist sketch of its surroundings, and a very "R.W.S." one of the town alone, too cheap for words. The latter was almost impossible with the crowd of natives—I kept a hundred or so at 20 yards' distance for ten minutes with stones, but when I had thrown all within reach of where I was sketching the Tibetans closed in, literally. After half an hour I threw my paint-water about—and finished almost in peace, except for the itching of the bug-bites, which Beetham (who was beside me photographing) got worse than I did.

*July 7th.*—Memo-Shekar, 22 miles. A devil of a long march. I walked and rode and lent my horse, and my sais was drunk and continually fell off one which he had hired for himself. My servant—a very nice little chap—had malaria with 104° in the morning, so I had to do all my packing and unpitch my tent, etc. Everything went wrong except that we did arrive at last. My servant and I (the former now normal and fairly chirpy) were putting up my tent, when my drunken sais rushed into it and tore it from Dan to Beersheba—so Geoff. offered me half of his for to-night. I didn't half use the tent-pole across my delightful groom's hinder parts, but he was too canned to feel it, I fear! To-morrow, I will make him mend the tent with an armed guard over him, I think. My servant is so nice, a willing, cheerful, steady boy of twenty: my sais is such a devil—began life as a lama's servant. Need more be said? He is frightfully religious and poojahs

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away at any old heap of stones, or at me if I am angry, lying at full length if drunk enough. But he is a hopeless sais—always loses me (or my horse if I am walking) on the march, and stops at every village for an absolute bellyful of chang.

On the way back to Darjeeling, I climbed an easy mountain of 19,000 feet near Kampa Dzong, walking up it as easily as one walks up Great Gable or Skiddaw. Such is acclimatization after four months. We had to dash down from the top as quickly as we could to avoid being struck by lightning.

The rolling, sandy hills of Tibet are never so beautiful as in the monsoon, with its blue haze that softens without obscuring. The sandy deserts of a few months ago are many of them green with grass and with the young barley. The fort at Phari Dzong, instead of being on a dirty mound covered with the carcasses of yaks and with offal from the town, is on a little green hill. Grass covers a multitude of shins and other parts of dead yak.

Finally, we arrived in Darjeeling, luckily four hours before the Town Band met us, so the official welcome was appropriately enough given to the coolies, who are the chaps who really deserve it. A few days of overfeeding there, and I started off on a short lecture-tour of India, arriving in Travancore at about the end of August. It was good to get to work again, and to help Pugh, who was almost as overworked as he had been before my arrival in 1923.

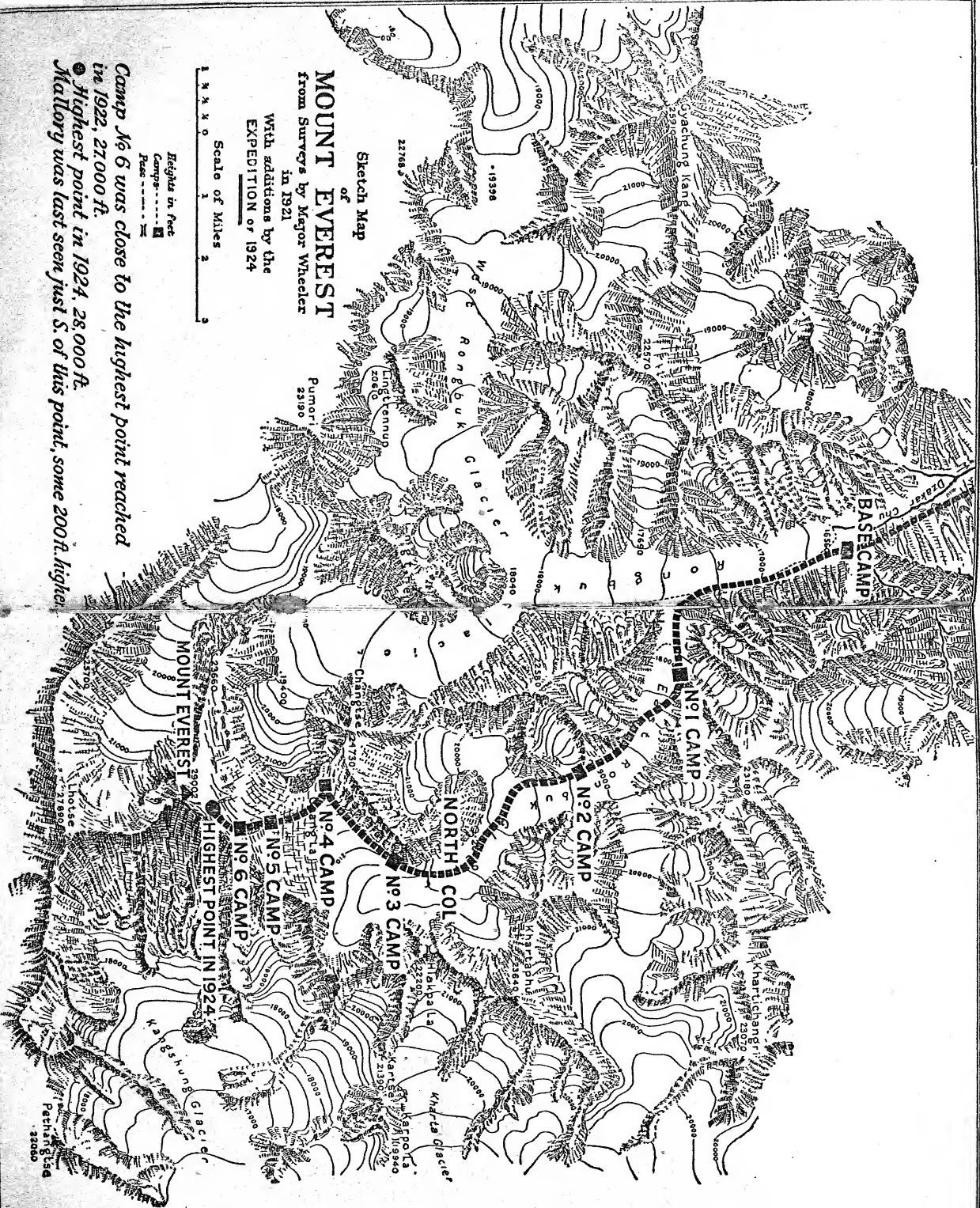
My travels in the northern parts of India had once more shown me some of the great contrasts between different regions of that vast sub-continent which we so often wrongly think of as a country.

In reading the remainder of this book, it is as well to bear this in mind. My life has been spent in the extreme southern end of India, and in many ways the habits and customs, and even the religion and thought, of the South are very different from those of the North. In Travancore,

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we see nothing of movements like the Arya Samaj, which has renounced caste and priestcraft and certain other of the social evils of popular Hinduism. In Travancore, too, we are living in a Native State, largely independent of the British Raj, with a Government of its own. The Maha Raja, a charming young man of simple life and enlightened outlook, has a friendly and engaging manner, and really does try to rule his people wisely and well. The ruling house of Travancore has set an example of devotion to duty which might well be followed by more of India's Princes. Animal sacrifice and temple prostitution were condemned in Travancore while they were still taken for granted in most other parts of India. But our job as medical missionaries has nothing to do with politics, and this brief reference to our local ruler will have to suffice. May his reign be long, happy, and prosperous.





⑤ *Highest point in 1924, 28,000 ft. Mallory was last seen just S. of this point, some 200 ft. higher.*



## CHAPTER XIX

### UP TO THE PRESENT

SEPTEMBER, 1924, SAW ME BACK AT WORK AT NEYYOOR, glad to be settling down there in a permanent way, ready to learn all I could about the Indians and their language, and to get on with the job of relieving their suffering and making them my friends.

Tamil is a very difficult language, and although the people of South India have many charming and attractive characteristics, one cannot be really friendly with people whose language one doesn't know. At the age of thirty-four, a new tongue refuses to come quickly, especially if you have only two hours of the day—and those the two sleepest hours—in which to learn it. But there were plenty of opportunities for practice, and after a few months I could talk enough to start a few rather superficial friendships and to ask patients elementary questions about their diseases.

Certain writers would make this a sentimental chapter, but I fear I am not one of them. Some feelings are too deep to be written about, and too sacred to be paraded, and I will content myself with recording the bare fact that it was at this period that I did the one thing above all others that has made my life worth living and has lifted me out of the selfish and commonplace. In December, the finest and most lovable of all girls consented to be my wife. Everest was over, and its risks were a thing of the past ; so I took my courage in both hands, made room in one of them for a pen as well, and wrote my proposal of marriage to Margaret, the only daughter of Sir James Hope Simpson, General Manager of the Bank of Liverpool.<sup>1</sup> Her reply was

<sup>1</sup> Now Martin's Bank.

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what I had fervently hoped for, but not expected, and as I spread the great news to my friends in the Mission, among the comments were : " She must be a very brave girl to marry *you*," and " Yes, it *is* about time you got some good looks in your family."

For a few months more I worked away at Neyyoor, drawing plans for the new women's hospital, setting up the X-ray plant, operating, going round the wards with Pugh, and from him learning a great deal about tropical diseases and how to handle them, all the time doing Tamil and getting to feel less lonely as I got to know a few Indians and began to look forward to a real home of my own.

In April of the following year, Pugh went for his holiday in the hills, and I found myself for the first time in charge of Neyyoor single-handed. I vaguely remember bothering Pugh with a number of letters in which I referred some of the problems to him. As yet, I hadn't learned the ways of the country, and used to take things like anonymous letters and quarrels too seriously. Whilst Pugh was away, the women's wards were empty. No respectable woman in India would allow an unmarried doctor to attend to her. That at any rate cut down my work and responsibility a little, but there seemed to be plenty to do, and no doubt a number of the staff thought it a fit occasion to try out the new doctor and see how he reacted to petty annoyances. At last Pugh got back, and in a few months more I sailed for home and wedding bells.

My fiancée and I had only two weeks of life together before we entered the unknown as man and wife—a most unsatisfactorily short time for what is supposed by many to be the most blissful period of youth. But it couldn't be helped ; marriage and a honeymoon had to be finished as soon as possible so that I could get back to India. We were married in Dr. Horton's church in Lyndhurst Road, Hampstead, on July 30th, 1925, and set out for Norway the next day. There we spent three weeks walking in the mountainous Jotunheim, which we crossed from east to

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west, finishing up with a week at Turtegro. During that week I climbed the Skagastolstind<sup>1</sup> with a stout-hearted Londoner who had never climbed before, but who did extremely well, whilst dear old Ole Berge the hotel-keeper comforted my wife with stories of the fatal accidents he had heard of on the same mountain, in hourly expectation of an additional one to swell the total. After a bit more walking and sailing round the Sogne Fjord, we got a train to Bergen, where, for the first time in three weeks, we struck a bathroom. We sailed for England and, after a brief week of packing and farewells, took a much bigger and steadier boat for Colombo.

I greatly enjoyed introducing my wife to the East, with the feelings of a proprietor, and we finished our honeymoon with a few days in Ceylon before crossing to India. Here, the Pughs kindly put us up until we got settled, and my wife learned from them some of the ways of Indian housekeeping. After that we had great fun in transforming my house from an unattractive bachelor residence into the comfortable and happy home which it has been ever since. For six months more I worked at Neyyoor, still learning Tamil for two hours a day, and in 1926 my wife and I went the long four-day railway journey to Kathgodam and motored up to Almora. There, for two weeks, we were the guests of Ruttledge, who was Assistant Commissioner of Kumaon, and his talented wife. After some days, Colonel Wilson joined us, having, as he put it, finished a war in Waziristan a day earlier than the programme said.

We started for the Himalaya at once, with a large cavalcade, to try to find out whether Nanda Devi, the highest mountain in the British Empire, was climbable. We also wished to see, if possible, the northern face of that same peak, which nobody had yet seen. As we neared the group of mountains around Martoli, of which Nanda Devi is the chief, we felt inspired by their beauty and their intense

<sup>1</sup> A fine rocky peak of some difficulty, called "The Matterhorn of Norway."

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steepness. I had always heard that, for scenery, this part was the cream of the Himalayas, far surpassing anything that the Everest group had to offer in effectiveness. Certainly, the Kumaon peaks were very fine, and some of them extremely steep. Nanda Devi itself is a most romantic mountain, fantastic in outline and hiding the colossal, unknown northern face <sup>1</sup> by surrounding it with a semicircular rim of flanking peaks, all over 20,000 feet high. A similar, but smaller, wall of rocky and snowy ridges encircles the south face of Nanda Devi as well, so that the lower parts of the north and south faces of the mountain had both been concealed from human view until Longstaff penetrated the southern sanctuary in 1907.

We took with us two Everest porters, "Alice and Satan," cheery and stout fellows, especially the latter, who was unfortunately killed on Kangchenjanga in 1930. Two amusing Gurkha N.C.O.s also accompanied us. One of them came into camp one day with a large gash on the forehead. He had thrown a stone at a monkey, but the animal had been too clever for him, for it had caught the stone in its hand and thrown it back with unerring aim and great force at his head.

The trek out to Nanda Devi was very beautiful, over several high passes, through two or three rushing rivers in broad, stony valleys, and provided with constant and ever-changing views of that superb pyramid, Nanda Kot, and the lovely summits of Pancha Chule, which form the west boundary of Nepal. Our first attempt to see the hitherto hidden northern side of Nanda Devi was made by means of a subsidiary glacier joining the main Milam glacier on its western side. Taking with us five or six porters, Ruttledge, Wilson, and I went up this glacier and camped at a height of 15,000 feet, on its lower part, in a romantic gorge of precipitous rocks. Looking eastward, the sides of the gorge

<sup>1</sup> Explored in 1934 by Shipton and Tilman, who wrote a book (*Nanda Devi*) about it which is well worth reading. Climbed in 1936 by Odell and Tilman.

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formed a superb frame for the peaks of the Pancha Chule range, one of the most perfect mountain views I have ever tried to paint. On the next day, we moved our camp along the glacier to a height of 17,000 feet, and for some reason or other I distinguished myself that day by getting a chill with fever and what I thought was mountain sickness of a sort. I went to bed as soon as the tents were pitched, and felt so completely well in the morning that I got up early and fetched a basin of water from a water-hole in the glacier some distance away. I boiled this in a saucepan, and gave it to the Gurkhas for their tea whilst I toiled down once more to the glacier to fetch some more water, and boiled it for the Sahibs' tea. We had just finished drinking this when the Gurkhas came along and asked for some water for *their* tea. I told them that I had already given them some; but rather apologetically they explained that, as I had cooked the water, it was thereby defiled owing to the rules of caste, so they had had to pour it away. A test of patience—I forget whether I stood it or not. Probably not.

Anyway, we started off as soon as everyone's hunger was satisfied, and went up a steep ice-fall which led us on to the upper level snow-field. At one point we had to cross a very rickety-looking ice-bridge, and got the rope into an awful tangle. I remember to my shame that I lost my temper with the rest of the party. I hope they will forgive me; there was some excuse, for I, having crossed the ice-bridge first, had to wait for the others in a place where stones were constantly falling from the steep crags above, and where it was obviously desirable to hurry. After twenty minutes of bombardment by these stones, in which we all shared when the bridge had been crossed, we traversed along the right bank of the glacier for half an hour, occasionally dodging further sniping by the mountain sprites, but coming through it unharmed. Alas! we found the upper ice-field deep in soft snow. It was quite evident that we could not reach the water-shed and look down into the Nanda Devi basin. After a short trial trip into this awful stuff, we gave it up,

and reluctantly returned to our camp, rejoining our wives in the Milam valley next day.

Another plan had to be adopted, the ascent of the Qual Ganga-ka Pahar, a shapely peak of over 20,000 feet, which we had spotted to be climbable, as well as probably offering a fine view into the sanctuary which through all the centuries had eluded the gaze of man. Up the Qual Ganga we went—a romantic, rocky gorge, bare of vegetation, provided with a very sketchy path, which in places of especial danger invariably faded out. We camped in a place where the valley became broader, at the foot of our peak. Ruttledge and his wife, Wilson and I, with the Everest porters, took up a camp and settled at 17,000 feet on a spur of the mountain with a gorgeous view. Next day, we moved up to 18,500 feet, finding the ridge harder than we had anticipated, and camped on a little slope of snow, converted after much digging into a ledge that just held the two tents. An amazing view of Nanda Devi and Nanda Kot to the south-west, and a fearsome-looking peak to the north-west, which we christened the “Bad Dream Mountain,” occupied all my attention as I painted it, whilst the others did my share of work as well as their own.

We set off the next morning, up the ever-steepening ridge, all climbable, but some of it difficult, and attained the shoulder of the mountain. It was getting late, and some of the party felt unequal to the task of doing the last few hundred feet of snow-ridge. We saw a good distance into the Nanda Devi basin from here, and after photographing the wonderful view, which had never before been vouchsafed to mankind, we clambered down the mountain to our camp. On the following day, looking down the steep lower slopes, I espied my wife toiling up to meet me, and spent a delightful morning with her, sitting on a rocky ridge at 16,000 feet and sketching.

The next morning I unfortunately awoke with a sharp attack of jaundice, due, I suppose, to some chill in one of the high camps, and whilst Ruttledge, Wilson, & Co. went on to



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Kailas in Tibet, my wife and I had to go back to Almora, and a week later to our work at Neyyoor. To get back to Almora we had to walk for more than a hundred miles over several passes of 10,000 feet. It had to be faced, although I was feverish, devoid of all appetite, and unable to take anything except milk without at once being sick. But my wife was simply splendid, and became the strong man of the party, carrying the heavier sack, getting the tents pitched, and making me comfortable in bed when I arrived in camp fagged out. After a few days of this, my strength returned and I was able to do my share.

The best treatment of jaundice is usually considered to be rest in bed. In this case I had done exactly the opposite and kept going, with hard exercise. The result was that I have never known a case of jaundice get on so well. Perhaps the doctors are wrong about it, after all.

We arrived in Almora in ten days or less, and travelled to Neyyoor by way of Agra, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, and other places of interest. When we got back, Dr. and Mrs. Pugh had already gone to England, and I found myself in charge of the Medical Mission, a job for which I felt very inadequate. Mr. Sandrothya, the head clerk of the hospital, was a tower of strength in the business side of the work. For many years he had kept the hospital accounts, and knew all about the prices of things, and where to enter them in the ledger—a side of life which was a closed book to me. How on earth the hospital and its branches managed to get on after Pugh left, I cannot say. It speaks well for the Indian staff that the Mission kept running, for Pugh was an excellent business man and organizer as well as being an efficient surgeon. Besides, he had been so long in India that he knew just how to deal with the incalculable psychology of the Travancorean.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the amount that Pugh did for Neyyoor. He found it in much the same condition as one of our larger branch hospitals is now. He left it the largest Medical Mission in the world, as regards the number

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of cases dealt with annually. He found it doing only minor operations and the easier major ones. He left it the best surgical centre south of Madras. He found the medical men working for a pittance of twelve rupees a month, and left them with a salary of four or five times that amount, a wage more suitable to their education and station in life. All this was done without asking for money from home, for he started the system of raising the money by fees, rightly reckoning that to treat the rich for nothing is not true charity. In Pugh's time the Medical Mission had made a bigger advance than during the time of any missionary before or since.

A welcome partner in my increased responsibilities was Dudley Marks, a young surgeon from St. Thomas's Hospital, who came along soon after Pugh's departure, in response to an urgent letter from me. He stayed with us two years, and by his quiet efficiency and modest manner won the confidence of the Indians in a way which was all the more remarkable because he knew not one word of their language, and in addition to that was unmarried. Would that he had stayed with us ; but unfortunately his family affairs demanded his return in 1928, and his place was taken by Ian Orr, who is still at Neyyoor. Orr was even younger, but has developed into a first-rate surgeon, and a first-rate missionary, too. Much of the research done at Neyyoor (and I wish that we had the staff or the time to do more with the amazing material at our disposal) has been done by him. Much of the efficiency of the present working of the hospital is due to him, and his truly Christian character and keenness are a great asset. With Harlow as business manager, we are indeed well off in European staff in comparison with what we were when Pugh left and I had everything except the nursing on my shoulders. Harlow saw at once, being a qualified chemist, that we were wasting large sums by getting our drugs in the wrong markets. By judicious buying from manufacturers, and making our own tinctures, tooth paste, tablets, antiphlogistine, and a thou-

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sand-and-one other things, he has saved the Mission many thousands of rupees every year, and enabled us to staff the hospital more adequately than was done in the past, especially on its nursing side.

A year after the departure of Pugh, our first boy was born at the hill station of Kodaikanal, where we usually go for our six weeks' summer holiday.

In 1928 I joined forces with Allsup in Darjeeling, and, together with ten of the Everest porters, we did some climbing on the southern side of Kangchenjanga. We failed to get up Pandim, which has never yet been ascended, although it is the nearest of all the higher Himalaya mountains to civilization. We reached the Guicha La, and there obtained the most marvellous view of the southern face of Kangchenjanga. We then struck west to the Pang La, where, unfortunately, Allsup developed dysentery, and I had to climb and sketch alone. We discovered a glacier and valley which were not on the map at all, and found a group of peaks of moderate size which will provide excellent climbing within ten days' march of Darjeeling. Coming home, we got some of the most superb views of the Eastern Himalaya, and forgathered at Darjeeling after an interesting and varied holiday. As far as climbing was concerned, illness had rendered us incapable of doing any great mountains. In spite of that, however, we had a very good time, as one always does amongst mountains. The porters did splendidly, as ever, and several young ones proved their worth, which they consolidated in the Nanga Parbat and other expeditions later.

In 1929, we went home for our first furlough, and whilst in England our second son was born. A ceaseless round of meetings made me return to India in 1930 more tired than I had been when I came home a year before ; but somehow we managed to keep going, and have now had five more years in India, a third son, and a year's furlough which is soon to close as I write these lines. During 1933, my wife went home to start our eldest boy off with his school life, as

he was getting too old for India. A boy of over six should not stay in the East, for the climate is so hot and soft that he gets no resistance to chills and chest diseases. He is also apt to have his head turned by thinking he is a "little Sahib" and therefore in some mysterious way a superior being, a trait which can be most objectionable in small boys, as I know only too well, having met several such.

As I was alone in India during that year, I went off for my hot-weather holiday to Kashmir, where I made a pilgrimage to Nanga Parbat. Nanga Parbat was the only one of the very high Himalayan peaks that I had never seen. I longed to see the immense southern precipice, the biggest mountain face in the world. After five days in the train, and two on a bus, I landed up at the house of Dr. Neve in Srinagar.<sup>1</sup> He and his wife were very kind, and put me into the way of getting a party together, besides telling me all the mountains best worth climbing. Dr. Neve himself has done a great deal of mountaineering in Kashmir, and made the first ascents of several of its best-known peaks. In three days, I was able to start, taking with me an "old boy" of Tindale Biscoe's well-known school in Srinagar. Tindale Biscoe's great aim is to make the jelly-fish-like Kashmiri into a man, and the chap who came with me was a fine specimen, tall and well built, the son of a noted Shikari (hunter), and able, thank goodness, to speak English.

After a few preliminary climbs, we started for the passes which lead to Gilgit, and were close to Nanga Parbat within ten days of leaving Srinagar. What a colossal mountain it is! Twenty-six thousand feet high, with a summit ridge several miles long, and no peak for many miles around higher than 18,000 feet. We climbed one of these subsidiary peaks, just opposite the southern face, and after going up a jolly ridge of rock and snow, we sat on the summit rocks and gazed for an hour at the wonderful and terrible precipice which sweeps down into the glacier, 15,000

<sup>1</sup> Pronounced to rhyme with "Rugger."

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feet below. The awful disaster which befell the German expedition of 1934 had not then, of course, occurred, but the sites where their camps were to be pitched could be made out on the crest of the mountain. The whole distance between their camp on the Rakiot peak and the farthest point they reached is several miles, but it appears as a mere incident in the tremendous ridge of Nanga Parbat. It was soon time to return, and down we went, by an easy, snowy shoulder, getting to the bottom of the mountain very quickly, but having a long walk back to camp. A few days of further scrambling and wandering into the recesses of the great peak, and we went home over the Kamri pass, the first crossing of the pass that year.

The people of the Rupal valley, in which we had been staying, are very prosperous, many of them owning hundreds of cows and horses. They play *real* polo, which originated in these parts. The ground is 300 yards long and 30 wide, and a chukker lasts anything up to half an hour. If one of them drops his stick, he picks it up without dismounting, sometimes at full gallop, for they are born horsemen. I played for one chukker, and had to stop owing to the extreme discomfort of riding an Astorian saddle in khaki shorts. It was a fine game, very sportingly played, and they are manly people, though a bit shifty, and very casual.

They live by agriculture, and trade by barter, never using any money except at distant places. The consequence is that they don't value money, and we had the greatest difficulty in getting coolies for our return journey. Four times the ordinary wage tempted them not at all. Finally, we managed to hire three ponies, which was only done by persuading the man who accompanied them that he would find a lovely big bazaar at Bandipur, and there be able to buy things the like of which he had never seen before. Arrived at the pass, the ponies sank up to their bellies in the snow, and we had a strenuous day getting the loads up the last 2,000 feet by carrying them ourselves. Unladen, the

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ponies were all right ; and on the southern side the snow had melted, so we got down quickly and easily.

On the way down, we passed a group of eight or ten men carrying a bed on which was an invalid destined for Neve's hospital at Srinagar. Poor things, they would have carried the patient more than 100 miles, over several passes, by the time they got there. Many a time on this trek we fell in with the mild, pleasant people of Yarkand, trading mostly in carpets, and with large cavalcades of pack ponies. One day we rescued one of their horses from a stream, and were their friends for life. I was pleased to see that, unlike so many animals in the East, the horses of the Yarkandis were invariably well kept and free from any sores, ulcers, or other signs of maltreatment. But they have to carry very heavy loads, poor beasts.

I rushed across India to Colombo, and there welcomed my wife, who had just arrived from England.

During the following year, a telegram arrived one day at Neyyoor, announcing that my father was ill and not expected to live more than a few weeks. Within a fortnight, I was home in England, having travelled by an Italian boat at an incredible speed. I found my father in full possession of those marvellous faculties of his, and had a few helpful conversations about my future, and the future of the family, in which my father showed his usual sanity of outlook and clarity of judgment. Slowly, however, as the days went on, he got more and more distressed in his breathing, and one day he called me to him, and said : " Look here ; I've cheated the doctors before this, and lived when they expected me to die. Is there a chance for me ? If there is, I'm willing to make a fight for it ; but it'll be a hard fight, and if it's no good, and if it will only lead to prolonging an existence that is miserable both to me and to other people—then I resign myself into the hands of God. His plans always go right."

I had to tell him, as gently as I could, that I felt a fight to be of no avail. His uræmia was getting worse, and I

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could not see the use of prolonging the agony of continual breathlessness and unrest. Very soon after that, he lapsed gradually into unconsciousness, and died peacefully on September 27th, 1934. His tremendous popularity and local influence were testified by the immense crowds who attended his funeral, and were all the more remarkable since he never courted popularity, but acted always and only according to his conscience.

His cheerful and optimistic disposition prompted a letter in *The Times* next day, in which he was described as "the man who has done more laughing in his life than any man I know." One of his obituary notices described him as one "whose presence lesser folk found comforting and reassuring, so strong, so unassuming, so devoid of pretence." A few days before his death he wrote: "Considering the pace at which much of my life was lived, tho' I was never a rapid worker, I have had a very good innings, for which blessed be God." All his family look back with joy at his happiness and goodness, and many have been helped by his straightness and his wise, considered judgment. He never forced his ideas on people, but always seemed to invite them to give of their best and to think for themselves honourably and straightforwardly. I cannot myself imagine a more ideal father, and his good qualities were so widespread, as it were—not confined to any one side of life, but permeating it all, and making a noble thing of it.

His interests ranged from painting and architecture to politics and religion, and in all he welcomed the modern point of view. His friends were in all branches of society, men and women of every kind of status and occupation, and, not least, children, with whom he was always so ready to play or to tell his delightful stories. To me, his elder son, he was all this and more—the inexpressible more that is in the deep things of life.

Soon after his death, I took my mother with me to India, stopping for a few days in the lovely cities of North Italy before we embarked at Venice. My mother was very

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interested in all my doings in India, as might be expected of one whose thoughts had been there so constantly during the past twelve years. She got to know a number of the people there—especially those who could speak English—and made a few real friends. One of these was a high-caste Hindu woman, youngish, and with a family of small children. She had cancer of the breast. In spite of very radical operation, and radium treatment, she could not be cured, and her death was simply a matter of months. My mother had a real love for this brave and splendid woman, doomed to be cut off so soon from this life—to a future of unknown incarnations of almost infinite number. I think she was helped by my mother's evident friendship with God to die more happily than she would otherwise have done.

My mother took a great interest, too, in the leper work, and that of the hospital in general, which she signalized by building, with the help of other members of the family, a Hall of Prayer for the hospital at Neyyoor in which patients or their friends of any religion can pray.

At this point, chronology must end, for the remaining chapters of this book are to deal with things which are part of my everyday life and experience. For the last thirteen years, I have lived in the atmosphere of India, and of hospital work there, and the chapters which follow will describe life in hospital, and will try to give a fair and unbiased picture of the life and thought of India—which I have come to love so well.



## CHAPTER XX

### QUACK DOCTORS IN INDIA

MENTION HAS ALREADY BEEN MADE OF THE UNQUALIFIED medicine-man of the Indian villages, and it must be remembered that the normal custom of villagers in India has been from time immemorial to call in this "vaittyān," "hakīm," or whatever he may be named in the local dialect, to treat the sick or injured. We had better consider him for a bit, and we will see how often he actually increases suffering and causes crippling and blindness. We will also see how great is the need for scientific medicine and surgery, and for the best in this line that we of the West can give to our less fortunate brothers in the East.

Wherever disease exists—and that means all over the inhabited world—men have looked for its relief, and have created by their demand a class whose purpose it is to supply the relief required. Disease has in it an element of mystery, so the connection between religion and medicine has always been an intimate one; and in Africa and other places the witch-doctor is the result. India, with its more ancient civilization, has not—fortunately for herself—developed this type of picturesque and evil impostor; but every Indian village has its medicine-man, though he is rather different from the African one. The principle is the same; the medicine-man is full of superstitions, and usually considers evil spirits to be the cause of disease. He thus easily exercises an influence over the simple village folk, many of whom are animistic in their own religion, and all of them ready to believe in evil spirits as the root cause of their complaints.

There are several kinds of these vaittyāns in southern

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India. First, there is the resident type, himself the son of a vaittyān, whose father has told him a few of the secrets of the profession, in the form of charms, incantations, herbs, or the use of the branding-iron. He probably knows a few medicines, some of these quite good and efficacious if properly used, but he is very hazy as to the dose in which they should be given. Once, a woman was rushed into our hospital half dead, with a blue froth around her mouth,<sup>1</sup> obviously caused by copper sulphate. We gave her a stomach-tube at once, and produced nearly an ounce of that extremely poisonous drug—enough to kill several families. It turned out that the good lady had typhoid fever, and her husband was a vaittyān. Acting no doubt in good faith that he was doing his best for her—perhaps he was!—he had given her this colossal dose of a poison. He was much distressed at his wife's condition, and when we asked him why on earth he had given her this awful dose, he merely said: "Of course, I know copper sulphate is usually a poison, but I boiled it a hundred and one times and recited a Mantram<sup>1</sup> over it. That took all the poisonous properties away." Poor man, the rapid death of his wife showed him the futility of his charms.

On the surgical, as opposed to the medical side, the treatment of the vaittyān is no less mistaken. For fractured legs, splints are hardly ever used, though they are often applied to the arm, even if no fracture is there, and tightly bound on in such a way as to deprive the limb of its blood supply and to cause intense agony to the poor patient. Other diseases are often treated surgically by the drastic and useless method, so common among our own ancestors in Britain, of the cautery. Almost the majority of patients who seek treatment at Neyyoor have a scar—often many scars—in some part or another of

<sup>1</sup> I.e. incantation, usually a verse of the Sanskrit, either traditional or from the Hindu Scriptures, supposed to have magical powers.

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their bodies, due to the branding which some village medicine-man has inflicted upon them with a red-hot iron, in order to cure some disease.

Injury and illness being due to an evil spirit, in the belief of a vast majority of the village people in India, the medicine-man's job in treating a case is to remove this evil influence. The screams of a patient as the hot iron sears his flesh, or as an irritant ointment made of pepper and chillies is rubbed into his eyes, are supposed by many of the countryfolk to indicate the passage of the devil in question through the mouth. To prevent this evil influence from returning, when once it is got rid of, the normal treatment is an application of cow-dung to the top of the head. When a patient comes into Neyyoor Hospital, the first thing we usually have to do for him is to wash this appalling mess off his head—a visitor to the hospital would be surprised to see what a large proportion of our patients come into hospital with this sanitary decoration; for though the folk in the villages around us are getting more enlightened, they are still far from giving up their faith in this harmless if repulsive remedy. "Safety first" is a good motto, and many patients try the treatment of three or four vaittyans, as well as that of one or two properly qualified doctors, lest haply the thing that really works the magic should be missed.

In cases of simple ophthalmia—that slight and common disease of children which can be cured by an ordinary lotion in a few days—the irritant ointment already mentioned is rubbed into the eyes, and the pain caused thereby must be intolerable, especially for a little child. I have known cases in which the eyesight has been destroyed by this barbarous treatment—cases who would probably have got well in a few days or weeks if they had had no treatment at all. One day, whilst walking through a South Indian village, a friend of mine noticed a piercing scream which filled her with horror. She went at once, guided by further screams, to the house from which they pro-

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ceeded, and there found a little girl being held down by misguided parents (who no doubt thought they were doing the right thing for her) whilst the village vaittyān rubbed an appalling mixture of pepper and chillies into her eyes.

Every patient, wherever he may be, wants to get better as quickly as possible; and, as most of us know, there are some diseases in which a rapid cure simply can't be done. Tubercular spines, who have to lie on their backs for months or years; failing hearts, who have to have rest; gastric ulcers on a diet—many indeed are the cases in which the sufferer is well named a "patient," and has got to put up with a long treatment if he is to get any benefit from it. In our hospital at Neyyoor, we get from time to time many such patients, and it is not an uncommon occurrence for them to tire of treatment. Some enterprising vaittyān hears of a case of this sort who is in hospital, and at two or three in the morning, when everyone is asleep—and perhaps the night staff have some special cases to attend to, or an emergency operation to get ready—the vaittyān will slink into the ward. There he persuades the patient that this business of requiring six weeks' or six months' treatment is all nonsense—"If you come with me, I can cure you in a week." Sometimes a patient is taken in by this sort of reasoning, and summons his friends to take him out of hospital. On my arrival in the morning, I have sometimes noticed the absence of a patient in whom I was especially interested and who was getting on well in hospital. I have been told on inquiry that his friends moved him out in the night "to get some better treatment, as they said." Alas, such cases usually end in tragedy. The vaittyān bleeds them of all the money he can get, promising the while that his treatment is a certain cure in a week. Then he gives some amazing concoction, or performs some impressive ceremony—and clears off to try the same game on elsewhere. Often we have heard that patients who have been

deceived in this way have died within a few days of leaving our hospital, from the effects of some poisonous drug or violent manipulation.

A few years ago one of the highest-born people in the land was suffering from a disease which is by all modern physicians considered wellnigh incurable. Having tried various doctors—homœopathic, allopathic, Ayurvedic and others—he sent for a well-known vaittyān who lived 200 miles away and had (for some reason I cannot fathom) a great reputation. The celebrated physician arrived, and gave the great man a dose which was said to contain five hundred different ingredients. Within a few hours he was dead. But the doctor still lived, and is doubtless still plying his trade.

On one occasion, a vaittyān came to a friend of mine and asked him to procure a pair of midwifery forceps. "What do you want them for?" asked my friend, a qualified Indian doctor of the better sort. "I have got to take some teeth out, and I want them to hold the patient's head still." "That's not necessary when you're taking teeth out." "No, I know, but it's necessary when I'm bidding up the fee. I won't let his head go till I get what I want out of him—it's not the teeth I want, but the money!"

Some time ago, a man came into Neyyoor Hospital with multiple fractures, very bad indeed, from a fall off a palm tree. He had broken both legs, both fore-arms, and the base of his skull. In six or eight weeks he was walking about, and doing things with both his hands. Several vaittyāns visited the hospital and made urgent inquiries as to what medicine we had used to effect this magic. They would not believe that it was due to splints, and when we told them so they were quite convinced that we were keeping back the secret from them, lest they should get hold of it and set up a formidable competition. Fractures are due to devils, therefore some magic drug that can exorcise them, or some secret incantation, is the only

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possible explanation of such a cure. We are told that "East is East and West is West," but there are many folk in Britain whose ideas are not very far removed from this sort of superstition.

Yet we have our medical legislation ; and one of the tragedies of India is that these medicine-men are completely unchecked, and can treat anybody with poisonous drugs or barbarous methods and produce fatal results without any control whatsoever. Occasionally, one of them will do something so outrageous that the law has to step in. For instance, two years ago in a village near ours a medicine-man heard that a first-born male child had been born a few doors away from his house. Now the liver of a first-born male child is supposed to be a very potent charm against almost any ailment. So the child was duly kidnapped and killed one night, and the vaittyman might have got away with it but for an unfortunate discovery in his backyard. Killing a neighbour's baby for however laudable a purpose—especially a first-born male, the supreme desire of every loyal Hindu—is not calculated to make a man popular in his village, and the physician's fellow-townsmen refused to give any evidence in his favour. In fact, things looked rather black for him, and I heard on good authority that it cost him a thousand rupees—a large sum in an Indian village—to bribe his way out of the clutches of "justice."

That is the grim side of the vaittyman ; but he has his humorous side, too. A man who kept a coffee-shop some thirty miles from Neyyoor brought his baby along for an operation. This was duly performed, and the child was getting on quite well when its father suddenly disappeared from hospital, leaving us very literally "holding the baby." It did not matter to us, as we have plenty of nurses to deal with that sort of thing ; but on his return a week later I asked him where he had been. He wouldn't say ; there was obviously something fishy about it, but I didn't press the point, and in two or three days

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the baby had recovered and the father took it home. Then we began to discover where he had been during those days of absence. He had gone round to some of the villages in the district, saying: "Dr. Somervell has called me in to help him treat some cases of cancer which he found too difficult to do himself. I am a famous cancer specialist, and for a consideration I'll treat anyone here who comes along to-day." The Indian villager is a simple soul, and a number of them believed this and entrusted themselves to his care. We discovered his misdeeds owing to the fact that several of his patients came along to Neyyoor afterwards for treatment for mysterious symptoms of poisoning from the drugs he had given them. A man like this represents the second type of vaittyān, the non-resident, purely adventurous type, "here to-day and gone to-morrow," who is simply out for a fee, and knows so little about the doses or effects of drugs that he is careful to be continually on the move, and thus to be some distance away by the time his drugs take effect.

With all their faults, vaittyāns are clever at massage, and the better among them have a good and well-arranged system of massage and physical medicine. This is no doubt derived from the Ayurvedic system of medicine, whose exponents constitute the third and by far the most respectable type of "unqualified" physician. The Ayurvedic system is of ancient origin, and dates from the Vedic times. Like the Hippocratic, it considers disease is due to a lack of balance between the fundamental "humours," Vayu (air or wind), Kabam (phlegm), and Pittam (bile). In many respects it is not unlike the medicine that was practised in Europe during the greater part of the Middle Ages and later, though the European variety was more varied in its superstitions and magic, whilst the Indian, with his innate love of systematization, has kept the Ayurvedic system much more rigidly organized and stereotyped throughout the ages. In many respects, also, the Ayurvedic system has remained quite unchanged, and its more

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strict disciples still adhere to the rules and classifications of the Vedic text.

During the course of the centuries, many very useful drugs have been found in India—*kurchi*, *nux vomica*, and others just as helpful when properly used. To the Ayurvedic doctors modern medicine owes this debt ; but the tragedy one so often sees among these physicians themselves is a complete lack of diagnosis and a consequent misuse of drugs, very often to the detriment of the patient. How often have I seen a tubercular patient hurried to an early death by the large dose of belladonna given him by the Ayurvedic fraternity. Belladonna stops a cough, certainly ; but it stops at the same time the chief chance that the patient has of getting rid of his infection. In matters such as these the Ayurvedic physician, though more civilized in his methods, is no more beneficent in his results than the *vaittayan* of the village. But in some things, such as massage, diet, exercise, rest, and in what might be described as physical medicine, the Ayurvedic system was right in front of that of the West, until recently.

An Ayurvedic college has been established in Madras, and if it takes to research, insists on accurate diagnosis, and applies scientific methods to investigate the effect of drugs on disease, it may make for real advance in medical science and be of great benefit to a large section of the human race. If it fails to do this, and the system remains traditional as in the past, it will be a very sad affair, for there are—and probably always will be—millions in India who trust to the Ayurvedic doctors.

These, then, are the ways in which the Indian villager, throughout many centuries, has got his medical treatment. To doctors of these sorts, in the vast majority of cases, he still entrusts himself, for the properly qualified and registered doctors in India are still totally insufficient for the treatment of India's millions. First, and least harmful, is the Ayurvedic man, traditional and conventional and usually entirely unscientific. The village *vaittayan*, super-



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stitious and sometimes cruel, may be careful up to a point, for he has to live with his patients. Far more disastrous is the travelling adventurer, completely ignorant, and devoid of any thought save for his pocket.

So it comes about that a Mission Hospital in India, such as has been my privilege to serve in since 1923, finds itself not only up against the normal diseases and accidents of a large number of people, but often has to deal with those sufferings rendered far more poignant and terrible by neglect or maltreatment.

## CHAPTER XXI

### A DAY'S WORK AT NEYYOOR

THE STAGE IS SET ; WE CAN IMAGINE NEYYOOR HOSPITAL besieged daily by many patients, some of them in desperate need, and some already having come too late for a cure to be possible.

The first thing to remember—and this we try to keep before us all the time—is that these patients are our brothers and sisters. Their skin may be a different colour, but inside they are the same as we are. Their customs and their way of looking at things may be different ; but they are, like ourselves, children of God and of the earth ; all one family, and with all the potentialities for development of character and physique that are common to mankind in Europe or Asia. So they have got to be treated as brothers, not merely as cases, not even as “interesting cases,” though some of them may, incidentally, be this. We have got to try to do our best for them, and bring to them the best we know in skill and service. In a sense it is easy to do this ; they are lovable folk in many ways, and the simple trust they put in the doctor is rather charming, and calls for a response from us to do all that is in our power to save them from pain and misery.

As everyone knows, in a hospital almost anything may happen. One of the fascinations of the medical life is this constant variety of case, this continual facing of fresh and personal problems. But to some extent there is a routine, and apart from individual cases and emergencies one day is very much like another. We start at seven—before the day begins to get hot—with prayers for all the nursing

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staff, sixty or more of them. This is the time when the night-duty people come off and hand over their work to the much larger day staff. Plenty of work has gone on before seven: operation cases have had to be prepared, and many odd jobs will have been done. But the day staff, prayers and roll-call over, start right in with their work, and by eight o'clock all the patients have been washed and fed, and the wards are ready for the visits of the doctors. It is the custom in India for patients who are ill not to wash. Although the South Indian is probably the cleanest race in the world, and normally bathes at least once a day, yet when he is ill he stops bathing immediately from fear of chill. In hospital, however, he gets washed all over nearly every day. Of course, there are a few special cases who have not got to submit to this ordeal, and others will have to have their wash in hot water; but in India the "cold" water is usually tepid, and most patients submit cheerfully to the wash, although it is entirely against their tradition.

By eight o'clock the Indian medical men have had prayers (in English) with Dr. Orr and myself, and at once we proceed to go round the wards. At eight there is a short service in each ward, usually taken by the senior orderly, or the doctor in charge. It seems hardly fair, does it, to hit a man when he's down—that is to say, to preach at a patient when he is lying in bed and can't get away from it? The old idea of medical missions as a bait to catch the unwary and then proceed to proselytize him is obviously not merely out of date, but definitely wrong and unChristian. So I thought one day, and I stopped the ward services. Before evening we had requests from various patients all over the hospital, Hindus, Moslems, and Christians, to continue them. Conscience was satisfied—the patients themselves had asked for the services—and we have held them ever since. After all, we are running the hospital because Christ healed the sick folk who came to Him. So it seems only honest that we should

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make that quite plain to our patients, and tell them something about the life and teaching of Christ.

We should not be content, I think, merely with doing our work in a Christian spirit ; we ought to tell our patients something at any rate about the Person whose way is the only solution of the world's problems, individual or national, and who, we believe, sent us out to do His work. But we have no right to proselytize. We must try to set before our patients, by life and love and action, an example to attract them to something higher than their own religion shows—but we have no right to persuade them to change that religion or to leave the faith which has come naturally to them and to their families for many generations. We may believe our own—or rather Christ's—way to be the better way, but the patients must be given a chance to see that for themselves, and if they want to change their religion—well, that is their concern, not ours, and is best left in the hands of God. So it seems to me ; though I know many missionaries and others will criticize this reasoning. But I cannot help thinking that this was Christ's own way of doing it. We have no record of His ever trying to change anyone's religion. He changed their lives, it is true—but He did so by saying, "Follow Me," not by offering future rewards for the fulfilling of certain dogmatic conditions.

Well, prayers are over in all the wards by 8.15, and the orderlies and doctors start the dressing of wounds, and the examination and supervision of all cases, both surgical and medical. Dr. Orr or myself, on alternate days, go into the operating-theatre about this time, and with a couple of the Indian doctors and a staff of orderlies proceed to do operations. As everyone knows, operations may be of any sort, and almost any disease or accident may bring its victim in for treatment. In Travancore, as well as all the ordinary diseases and injuries which are part of the day's work in any surgical clinic, we tend to get three special classes of case.

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First, and most remarkable, come the diseases of the stomach, especially that one which is known to doctors as duodenal ulcer. From the patient's point of view, it is a pain in the stomach which occurs regularly after meals and lasts usually until the next meal. In Travancore it usually begins about the age of twenty—often younger—and if not treated properly it leads to continual vomiting and gradual starvation, with a life of increasing misery. Every meal, though it removes the pain for an hour or so, is followed with awful regularity by intense pain that lasts until something else is eaten. Thousands of people in Travancore, especially in those parts where the diet is deficient in vitamins, are suffering to-day, and have been suffering for years, from this distressing complaint. In 1913 Dr. Pugh was the first man in India to recognize the almost invariable failure of medical treatment, sooner or later, for this disease. In the face of opposition, he started operating for it, and at once got results which the physicians could not approach. Major Bradfield, in Madras,<sup>1</sup> had the same opposition from his medical colleagues when he recognized its nature a year or two later, and his operations had the same good results. Ever since then, Neyyoor has been building up a reputation for this type of operation, which we have performed 2,500 times in the last ten years, and by now the chief Government hospitals in Travancore, as well as in British India, treat these cases in tremendous numbers by surgical methods. It is good to know that the pioneer of all this relief of suffering, as far as India is concerned, was Dr. Pugh of Neyyoor.

Duodenal ulcer is six hundred times as common in Travancore as it is in North India, and in some parts of India it is very rare indeed. But in some of the districts of Central and North Travancore it is so common that I once found a family of five brothers who all had it—and all have now been operated upon at Neyyoor and

Now Surgeon-General, Indian Medical Service.

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are fit and well to-day. Fortunately, the results of the operation we perform for duodenal ulcer are very good indeed, and at least four out of every five patients are permanently relieved of all pain, while the majority of the remainder are very greatly benefited. Moreover, the death-rate of the operation is little more than 1 per cent. The village vaittyans treat it with their branding-irons, and the majority of gastric cases who come to Neyyoor have scars on their tummies from this barbarous and useless treatment. We add one more scar—the scar of the operation, performed under an anæsthetic and entirely devoid of pain, which cures the disease. The people of the villages used to think that our operation consisted of making a hole in the stomach to let the devil out; so we built a gallery at the end of our operating theatre, and in it we allow anyone who likes—patients, relations, or others—to see the operations. By this time, many thousands have seen us at work, and know that a surgical operation is a careful and intelligent procedure. Moreover, they have been shown the disease inside, and been given an explanation of how the operation cures it. Thus not only have we spread a little knowledge among the people around, but they have learned to come to us for treatment far earlier than was their custom in the past. Whilst people with such diseases as cancer used to apply to us for relief when in an altogether hopelessly inoperable and incurable condition, they are now coming far more often in an early stage of their disease and going home cured, with a good prospect of a happy and healthy life in front of them.

That leads us to the second of the diseases which we are most constantly having to relieve—cancer. In 1934, out of just over two thousand major operations of all sorts performed at Neyyoor, 590—nearly one-third—were for cancer. Yet the other day I read an article in a reputable medical journal which based its chief conclusions on the so-called “fact” that cancer is non-existent in the Oriental races. The type of cancer we most frequently have to deal

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with is in the mouth, jaw, and tongue. Now, this variety of cancer is just the one which benefits most from treatment by radium. For years we carried on with operations, curing a few of the cases, but not nearly as many as we should have done had we only got some radium. In 1929, however, I managed to collect nearly a thousand pounds from friends in Britain, and since then our treatment of these cancer patients has been revolutionized. It was in Neyyoor that the first special wards in all India to be built for the radium treatment of cancer were put up. Dr. Orr, my colleague, has done an excellent bit of research into the causes of this cancer of the mouth which condemns so many Southern Indians to one of the most miserable of all deaths. He has found it to be due to the chewing of certain kinds of tobacco. Now, most Indians chew betel nut, and many of them mix it with various kinds of tobacco, but it is only two or three of these different sorts which cause, in any large numbers, the dreaded cancer. If the Government put an embargo, or a very high and prohibitive duty, on these two or three varieties of tobacco, it is my belief that they could stamp out half the cancer in South India with a stroke of the pen. Perhaps they will do it one day; but meanwhile thousands of Indians are contracting this terrible disease and dying, painfully and slowly. It is a great privilege to be able to bring life and health to a large number of them. There, again, we find the unqualified doctors, of all three kinds, entirely powerless to alter the course of cancer, and often giving painful and irritating drugs in their vain attempts to do so. Thanks to the gradual spread of the knowledge that the only hope of cancer is early treatment—and that, too, by a properly qualified doctor—we find that patients are coming to us, in ever-increasing proportion, in time to be relieved. By the combined use of radium and operation we can now save the lives of many scores, if not hundreds, every year.

The third class of case which we get in large numbers

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in Neyyoor consists of broken limbs from palm-tree accidents. Approximately a million of the people in our part of India earn their livelihood, or a good part of it, by climbing palm trees. The coco-nut is the mainstay of Travancore; its milk quenches your thirst, its flesh yields oil and food; its leaves are used as thatch for your roof; stalks provide fuel, and the trunk is the chief building material for your house. You sweep with a brush made from the fibre of palmyra palm, and drink toddy from its sap out of cups made from its leaves. You find your way at night with a palm-tree torch; you chew the areca nut which grows on another and very slender palm, and besides these there are the sago palm and several others.

No wonder that so many people have to spend a large part of their lives climbing palm trees of one sort or another. Many of the climbers begin very young, and develop marvellous agility in running up the leafless, branchless stems, their ankles tied loosely together with a thong in order to get purchase on the trunk by the action of their knees. Alas, the thong sometimes breaks, and down comes the climber. He is lucky indeed if his life is spared from a fall of anything up to 70 feet on to the hard, sun-baked earth. Where you have so many thousands of men and boys climbing from fifty to a hundred trees in a day, accidents often happen. We have seen in Neyyoor the most frightful smashes-up caused in this way. Sometimes they come to us so terribly injured that we can do nothing but let them die in peace in an hour or two. Sometimes they have been previously maltreated by a village vaittyān and are crippled so badly that it requires two or three difficult operations to straighten their limbs and get them fit to earn their living once more. Often, thank God, they come straight to us, and we are able, with the aid of X-ray, surgery, and splinting, to make a good job of it and send them home fit and able-bodied within a few months.

Besides these three main classes of patients—stomachs, cancer, and smashes—we have to deal with all and sundry



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just as in any other surgical hospital. A good proportion of our cases are women, which is only natural when you consider how few hospitals there are in our part of the world which have a walled-in portion where women alone are admitted. I can think of only four within a hundred miles of Neyyoor, representing a population of several millions. Acute and desperate cases arrive from time to time, and often have to be dealt with at once, as emergencies, at any time of the day or night. But the ordinary day's work in the operating theatre consists of perhaps ten, twelve, or more major operations. Some of these are done by our Indian doctors, a few of whom are very efficient operators. But there is a strange characteristic of the Indian surgeons in our part of the world—a queer indecision in the face of the unexpected. If he is operating on a patient and, having got into the tummy, he fails to find there what he had expected or had diagnosed—then it is only the exceptional Indian surgeon who will go about the work in a business-like way, knowing exactly what to look for and how to do so without in any way harming his patient. It is this fact which sometimes results—when I have left the operating-room for an hour's work in the office or the wards—in the sudden rushing in of a messenger: "Sir, sir, come to the theatre!" I generally know what that means; somebody is inside an abdomen and hasn't found the disease he expected. So there is nothing for it but to wash up at once and finish the operation myself. This failure to take absolute responsibility—or perhaps only a fear to take it—on the part of many Indian doctors is the chief thing that makes us Europeans necessary.

I hope that before long this diffidence will disappear, for there is no doubt that we medical missionaries ought to be unnecessary. We must always hold in front of us the ideal we should aim at—that the Indian Church itself should take over Medical Missions completely. The Medical Mission should be the helping and healing hand of the Christian

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Church in India for the sake of their less fortunate brothers of whatever faith or social standing. It has for long been a philanthropic agency run from Europe and America ; it will gradually have to become India's own Christianity in action. When a larger number of Indian doctors of high professional morality have become possessed of that self-confidence and sureness of judgment which alone can be the foundations of good surgery, a new era will have dawned indeed, and India will be able to do without us medical men from England. What a day for India that will be ! At present, she has so many inefficient doctors, and so few really good ones. But the good time is coming, I am sure.

Our Indian doctors are a very useful lot on the whole, and by far the greater part of the running of the hospital is dependent on them. Except for cases who have spinal or local anæsthetics, these men have to give all the "dope " to the surgical cases. We have great fights sometimes, when the patient is alcoholic, or the doctor a bit casual with the chloroform. Of course, the patient is completely unconscious even when fighting, but a little extra dope restores him to the correct condition of tranquillity. One thing we notice about Southern Indians when they are undergoing operations is what good patients they are. They make very little fuss, and usually take even a big operation as a matter of course. One reason for this is the brutality of so much of the village vaittyān's treatment. Branding is not done by him under chloroform, and the idea of being asleep whilst an operation is being performed is no doubt a very preferable alternative to the dread of a branding-iron.

As already mentioned, the patient's friends or relations very often want to see their comrade's operation, and we allow them to do this if they go to the gallery and wear a proper mask to prevent the contamination of the air in the theatre by germs. They probably think that these masks are part of a secret ritual, and indeed, the operation-

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room, with everyone entirely covered with white gowns and caps, and only their eyes to be seen, must appear to the villagers like an extremely select and mysterious rite. Of course, it is in fact a Divine Service in a very literal sense of the words, and more truly a service than many mumbled words in churches which go by that name. The first operation of the day is always preceded by a prayer, in which we ask God to guide our hands and give us the skill and insight which will bring health to the patients. Though there are no more uttered petitions during the rest of the operating work, yet we hope that the true spirit of Christian service is shown throughout the day's operations.

After some hours, the bigger cases—abdominal things of various sorts, operations on legs and arms and the removal of growths—draw to an end. Then comes the turn of smaller things like tonsils, and usually one or two cases have to have a whiff of chloroform for the insertion of radium into some cancerous growth in the mouth. By three or four in the evening we have done the last case, and with luck we get home for a bite of tea. If our luck is out, no sooner have we finished everything than we hear of some emergency—perhaps a broken leg from some fall from a palm tree, perhaps a baby who has no choice but to be born after the manner of Julius Cæsar, or some acute case who has just arrived, carried across miles of country in a bed by five or six of his faithful and anxious relations. If that sort of thing does happen—and it is a fairly frequent occurrence—then we just have to buckle to and begin again or dash back to the hospital directly we have swallowed our tea, to find that the staff have got everything ready, and yet another operation has to be done. Poor staff! They often have a tremendously hard and continuous day's work; and then, perhaps, a night's work as well. We surgeons leave the theatre when operations are finished; but their work is by no means done then. Yet I have never seen the theatre staff grousing or disgruntled, nor have I known them to relax their efficiency.

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After tea, although there are hours of work still left for us to do, we very often manage to get a game of tennis—just one or two sets. Almost the whole hospital staff gets off for an hour in the evening in order to play games. Half of them are off from four to five, and the other half from five to six. Tennis, badminton, volley-ball, and gymnastics are the order of the day, for we all know—doctors, nurses, orderlies, and everyone else—that we can do better work if we keep fit. As for the way the work is done, the best sportsman will always make the best Christian, and he who knows how to take a beating and remain cheerful will always be best and kindest to his patients.

But time goes on—tennis must be very strictly limited, for there is a lot to do still. All day long the Indian doctor in the reception-room has been seeing out-patients, and has no doubt collected a few special or difficult cases for Orr or myself to examine in the evening. Besides those, there are always a few patients who have come a long way and are prepared to pay our consulting fee in order to see the Medical Missionary. Then several may have to be looked at in the X-ray, for I always prefer to look at all abdominal cases myself. Much more can be made out by a personal examination under X-ray than by merely reading the report of someone else and seeing the photos he has taken. Except for these particular cases, all our X-ray work is done by Mr. Harlow and his assistant, Josiah; these two are sometimes at it for a good few hours during the day, and do excellent work which would be a credit to many bigger and better-equipped hospitals.

After seeing consultation and X-ray cases, then, you might think that we could go home. Not a bit of it. There are always some special patients to visit in the wards. Here is one who is very ill with pneumonia and we are not quite sure whether he will live till to-morrow, yet, if he does, we know he has a good chance. So every precaution has to be taken to tide him over the anxious hours of his crisis, and the right instructions to the order-

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lies about his treatment during the night may make all the difference between life and death. Here is a little girl with typhoid, the only child of her parents, and very gravely ill. Perhaps we can save her, and if we don't do just the right thing her poor mother and father will be childless. So she has got to be visited. In the next ward is a woman who broke her leg and went to a quack doctor; she is horribly septic, as well as restless, and we know that her one chance is in perfect rest. So the nurses get ready some plaster of Paris, and we have to spend half an hour giving her the only thing which can afford her complete rest—a well-fitting, solid jacket of plaster round her leg. In the morning she is better beyond all our expectations, saved by the rest which perfect fixation alone can give, and which she wouldn't have got if we had gone home in time for dinner.

At last, all is finished, and out comes a pipe from my pocket. I never smoke in hospital, and the pipe is a sign that I'm off home, and won't see anyone else. All the way up the road I am followed—and sometimes rather pestered—by some relation of an operation case put down for to-morrow, who wants to bargain about the fee. We would like to do it for nothing, but the hospital has to be run, and if we cut down fees we must cut down expenses also. That means fewer patients, or a poorer quality of treatment. So we refuse to bargain, and the patient's friend thinks we are horribly hard-hearted and grasping. Never mind—we can't bother about what people think. "The show" has got to come first. It is no charity to do things for nothing for the rich, and thus to have to send some poor sufferer away. Having got rid of this complainer, I find another grouser at my gate. His is a trivial grievance and can be set right to-morrow.

At last, I get on to the veranda, and there I find my wife having a garland put round her neck by a grateful patient and his family. There is another of these floral tributes waiting for me, and a polite present of a few mangoes. I wish the patients wouldn't spend money on

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garlands, but rather put it into the box in the hospital. But it is the custom of the country, and we have no wish to offend, so we receive the sweet-smelling and rather prickly garland with effusive thanks, and tell the patient that it is God he must be grateful to, not us. With a few pleasant words and salaams, the family withdraws to catch their bus home, and the day's work is ended. With luck, there *won't* be an emergency in the middle of the night. With luck, we will have an undisturbed dinner, and afterwards put one of Brahms' Symphonies on the gramophone. Out comes my violin and the first-fiddle part of the symphony, and the soft air of the Indian night is rent with the awful sounds of my violin. Anyone who has heard that instrument in my hands knows what true ear-torture is, and my devoted and long-suffering wife sits through it all and pretends for my sake to enjoy it. With luck, the symphony won't be interrupted more than three times by messengers from the hospital, or by people who want a letter to someone I have never met, recommending them for a job for which they are totally unsuited.

If our luck still holds, we will eventually get to bed about eleven, and will not have to get up and go to the hospital in the middle of the night. But it doesn't always hold. All the same, it's a great life, and I wouldn't change it with anybody.

## CHAPTER XXII

### A VISIT TO THE BRANCH HOSPITALS

IT IS HARVEST TIME, AND EVERYONE WHO IS AT ALL ABLE-bodied is employed on the land. So there are fewer patients at Neyyoor than we usually have. Chronic disease can wait until the harvest and the ploughing are over. This is the time when we visit our branch hospitals, and there get some of our hardest work. Orr and I do it by turns, for there are two harvests in the year, in February and September. This time it is my turn to go, and Ian Orr is left at Neyyoor to carry on the work there.

The car is packed up with all the instruments for operating, drums full of dressings and towels and things, basins, bottles, and a certain amount of food and cooking utensils. The first "branch" we visit is Nedungolam, the hospital which was entirely built by one family, the Rama Rao Brahmin family whose present head, Rao Sahib Padmanabha Rao, lends me a small house at Nedungolam whilst I am working at this hospital. As well as all the equipment, therefore, I have to take Matthew, my excellent butler, who will look after me and feed me whilst I am in camp. Two or three nursing orderlies, of whom one is capable of doing some pathology, are also taken—if there is room in the car. If not, one or two of them may have to travel by bus.

Arrived at Nedungolam, we find a large crowd awaiting us. On one occasion I spent the whole of a day here, examining patients, seeing a hundred and fifty. Three hundred and more were still left and many had to return home unseen, to come again next day. For four days this sort of thing goes on. Examination may have to be

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very cursory, but a lot of the patients can be diagnosed quickly, and instructions given to the Indian doctor as to their treatment, with which he carries on after I have left. Others have to be operated upon, and my usual plan is to do operations on the alternate days, only seeing patients who have come from a distance on the operating days. This extract from a letter written at Nedungolam in 1925 shows the sort of work we get.

“ . . . The amount of work one has to do here is appalling. Yesterday and the day before over 150 patients, who had come five miles and more to the hospital, had to go home without seeing me. Yesterday I saw 153 sick folk, from 7 a.m. till 8.30 p.m. continuously. To-day, being Sunday, is a half holiday, so we only have patients from 10 a.m. till dark. Tomorrow, operations. Many cases are frightfully bad and untreatable. One wretched woman had had boiling water poured into her womb to cure some disease, by a native doctor (vaittyān), resulting in the most awful mess I have ever seen. Another had a large cancer which had been treated by having had some pus from a septic sore rubbed into it; someone else's sore, of course. The result was the most appalling ulcer 6 inches across, and the woman half dead with fever and septicæmia.

“ For the most part, the native treatment merely takes the form of poison, which sometimes kills and sometimes doesn't—a corpse is somehow less repulsive, and excites less pity, than those odoriferous and miserable-looking objects who owe their terrible state to the effects of native medicine. . . . The patients are so numerous that one has to be quite severe on occasions to keep any order at all. One way of doing so—as the door has no inside lock—is to slap the faces of any who peer in. It is very necessary to do this sometimes, especially when I am examining women, but I wish that my heart, filled with compassion though it is, would keep my voice and manner more often under control, and in accord with the Master's tact and kindness.



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Still—what *are* you to do when people crowd in at doors and actually prevent you working?

"I always make a point of being just as severe on Brahmins or Pastors as on the lowest of outcastes. I'm sure the people misunderstand that, as it's against all their ideas to consider all men as equals. I always see untouchables at the same table as everyone else, tho' that is most unorthodox, and even our own Indian Christian doctors wouldn't dare to do it.<sup>1</sup> It's 'not done' here!

"I have never had such hard work as these last few days since the War, when on one occasion I operated for two and a half days on end. But I'm very fit, and though dog tired at 9 p.m., I'm perfectly recovered and fresh by the morning.

"The business of getting fees is very hard, and sometimes very amusing. A rich Brahmin went down on his knees and whined like a beggar, with many people looking on, this morning. All to get off a few rupees' fee for a small operation. Yet the same man is proud and haughty as he walks down the road, despising the outcastes all round him, as he is convinced that he is a superior being! I had to threaten to put a tumour that I had removed back into a patient in order to get one-third of the fee that he (a rich man) had promised for its removal. I couldn't postpone the operation, as it is my last day here—so I had to do it before getting the fee—a very bad principle unless you get a hostage first—jewels or something. It's much better, and is our usual rule, to get all fee-paying done before treatment starts. Otherwise, any kindness we show to the patient after operation might be misinterpreted as a cadge for money, and thus it would lose any Christian influence it might have.

"As regards kindness, the Indian idea is very different from ours. It seems traditional to give money to beggars. That is often the chief idea that the Indian has of kindness. The idea of trying to get a beggar a job, or to give him lasting help, never enters their heads—there

<sup>1</sup> This is not true now—eleven years later.

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seems to be no sense of social responsibility outside the family, which, with the caste, is the supreme unit of Indian society. And the almsgiving business is done in order to get 'Punniam' or merit for yourself—not for the beggar's sake.

"The way in which Mr. Padmanabha Rao and his family have built this hospital and take an interest in it is a very exceptional and worthy thing—I wish it were more usual!"

Here is an old woman with cataract. Gradually, her sight has got dimmer, and last year she went to a hakim <sup>1</sup> with a local reputation (largely created by his own friends and their advertising energies). He attempted to cure her, but destroyed the eye he operated upon with a dirty needle. Luckily for her, he only tried one eye. We can save the other and give her a good deal of sight in it—so she is for operation to-morrow. Next, a little baby with a rupture. A whiff of chloroform and a few stitches will put that right—he is for operation to-morrow. Then we see a crippled boy, almost starving, for he has had a crippled leg for several years owing to a vaittyān's maltreatment of a fracture. He will have to have it X-rayed, so we mark him for Neyyoor. He bursts out crying, for his people can't possibly afford to take him a one-and-sixpenny bus ride, nor to feed him when away from home. But the other two patients, rather better off, have each had to pay a rupee for their consultation fee, and there are two rupees for the crippled boy's journey. I write a note to Orr, telling him of the boy's circumstances, and we pack him off in the next bus. Next, a young married woman—very worried, as she has never had a baby, and she is longing for a child. Besides, there is the question, so important to the Hindu, of the disgrace of being childless. Can we do anything for her? She is directed to the private examination room, and after seeing a few more patients I go along there with the nurse to examine

<sup>1</sup> Mohammedan medicine-man.

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her, and find that we will be able to do a small operation that might be effective—but, of course, no guarantee. She also will be for operation to-morrow. On one of these visits I was surprised to find a tremendous number of women among the patients, all with the same complaint—that they had no children. I couldn't make it out. Why had every childless woman for miles around come to see me that day? It turned out that a year previously three or four women had come to the hospital, and I had operated upon them. Within a year, all but one had produced a child. The report of this had spread about the district, and the barren ladies of all that countryside had flocked to see me, in the hope of getting a similar result.

The next patient is an old man who says he has a weak heart. No particular disease but old age. I tell him so: "My dear old chap, it's not illness, but years. We can take away a diseased part of you, but we can't restore the years gone from your life." "Oh, but, sir, I want an operation!" A little cheery banter, and a bottle of medicine of strong taste and brilliant colour is prescribed. Quite useless, but the old fellow will be older still with disappointment if we don't do something for him. There are times when one is simply bound to indulge in quackery.

Then comes a child covered all over with horrible ulcers, in filthy condition—a pariah untouchable; and truly there is no great temptation to touch either the child or its mother. But we are here not merely to cure our patients, but to demonstrate our conviction that all men are equal, so I take the poor little ill-kept creature on to my lap, and hear gasps of horror from some of the more high-caste patients standing around. The disease is yaws, a very striking disease, for one or two injections of salvarsan will cure it completely. I give the first injection then and there. Syringes and things are always ready to hand—that's what we brought our orderlies for—and, with luck, the little baby's skin will be nearly healed within a few days. We look at the mother and father who have brought

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it, and see that they, too, have the same complaint. More injections, and the knowledge that, for a time at least, we've done something to make that poor family a little less miserable. So it goes on all day.

Quite a large number of the patients will have duodenal ulcers, and in the old days we had to tell them to go to Neyyoor, with the result that only those who could afford it went there, and many of them got worse and worse, staying at home and being treated with a little soda now and then. Soda allays the pain, but does little or nothing to cure the ulcer.

However, that is changed now. Our three chief northern branch hospitals have got operating theatres, and these gastric cases can have their operations done locally and can have adequate nursing, for we have brought with us some of our best nursing orderlies from Neyyoor, well trained to look after patients who have had abdominal operations.

A few years ago, Mr. Padmanabha Rao put up a nice little operating-room at Nedungolam, so now we can do anything there which doesn't require very special or prolonged treatment.

By the end of the day we have seen a large number of patients, some of whom have been waiting for months for our arrival. The operation list for to-morrow—a very long one—is made up, and the fees are settled, usually very small ones. Many cases will have to be done for nothing. If patients are well enough off to pay a big fee, they are always advised to go to Neyyoor with its greater comfort and facilities. These visits to the branches are mainly intended to deal with those patients who cannot afford to come to Neyyoor; as such, they are a very necessary and important part of our work.

On the following day, operations provide us with a great deal to do. When I arrive at the hospital after breakfast I see a crowd already clustering round the window of the operating-room, hoping for a view of something that will

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satisfy their taste for the macabre. We don't mind them looking on at some things, as long as the window is shut—and twenty or thirty noses will be glued to the glass, with occasionally a scrap for a good place, and a rush as the school bell goes and a few of the better stances become vacant. Some operations, and especially those done on women, we do not allow an audience to see. Once, I had a suspicion that someone was looking through the keyhole of the door whilst I was doing an operation on a lady of the district. I filled an ear-syringe with water and a little iodine, and squirted it through the keyhole. There was a roar of applause outside. When the operation was over, I went out, and found that my victim had been an extremely pious and respectable padre, one of the chief assistants of the local bishop. No wonder the crowd had chortled! Scribes and Pharisees are ever with us.

On another similar occasion, I perceived a face at the window whilst I was dealing with some female cases. Quietly going out of the room, I went outside and gave the unsuspecting sightseer—who was still looking intently through the window—a tremendous slap on the back. He was furious, and at once sent for the village lawyer to discuss my prosecution for assault. "All right," I said, "get on with the case. Of course you realize that I shall have to give an account of your behaviour in my defence." That was the last I ever heard of *this* incident. Served him right; I hope the lawyer charged him a fee.

At the end of a day's work at Nedungolam, one of the lads of the village comes along to tell me that a boat is ready if I would like a bathe. The hospital is situated near a "kayal" or inland lake, of which there are many in Travancore, some of them in communication with the sea. So down we go, joined first by one and then by another, until we have picked up a very large boat-load, and then some, as the Americans say. The boat, a good seaworthy one built rather after the English style, is

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crowded up to the gunwale, and off we go, propelled by a few paddles and braked by numerous feet dangling over the edge. I have to order everyone to keep still, or we will have our bathe before we intend. But all is well, and eventually we arrive at the bathing-place about a mile away, where the river has a lovely sandy bed five feet deep. Here the sweat of the day's work is washed off in the tepid stream, and I am kept going, dodging about in the water in attempts to catch the village lads, who are all first-rate swimmers, and hardly ever get caught, however near to me they approach. And so home in the boat again without mishap, and two more days' work ahead before we pack up and move on to the next place, Kundara.

Here is one of the oldest branches of the Medical Mission, where very large numbers of sufferers are treated daily as out-patients. The population is dense in the country around Kundara, and disease is very prevalent. Added to the ever-present duodenal ulcer—here at its worst—is a very large amount of tubercle of the lungs. The reason for this is that the people of this district, instead of living in veranda-like houses as do the Travancoreans of the south, live in houses with rooms that can be shut. In these, they close the doors and windows at night, keeping themselves all unknowing in the worst possible conditions as far as tubercle is concerned. I have cured many early cases of tuberculosis in this part of the country simply by telling them of this and getting them to sleep at night in a veranda. Many others are treatable by simple methods, but a very large number are hopeless without special sanatorium treatment in a good climate. The nearest good sanatorium is at Madanapalle, a vast place run most efficiently by a united board of medical missions; but that is 600 miles away, and it is impossible for more than a few of the better-off patients to go there. A great many are doomed, and the activities of the quack doctors of the villages hasten their end.

The little roadside hospital at Kundara, with two small

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wards of eight beds each, was entirely inadequate for the work it had to do. More out-patients were treated here daily than at any other branch hospital, and as for the in-patients, our Indian doctor had to requisition accommodation for them in half a dozen of the houses near by. The result can be imagined—no medical mission could be satisfied with such a state of affairs. But we had no funds to make things better, and it went on and on from bad to worse. The more efficient the doctor at Kundara, the more inadequate the accommodation for his patients. At last, only in 1934, the Boys' Brigade took it up, and covenanted to build an adequate hospital at Kundara, and to help us to run it at their expense. A large sloping piece of land was acquired, only a furlong or two from the old hospital, and now we have built two spacious wards and an operating-room. Other buildings are going up, and in a few years we expect it to be a fine hospital. By April 1935, it was adequate for over fifty patients. It was great to be able to say to the cases, of whom so many in the past had to be sent to Neyyoor: "You want a big operation, and we can do it *here* and now." Those whom we formerly marked down for Neyyoor very often burst into tears, knowing that they could never afford to go there. They went home, perhaps to die—almost certainly to suffer under the maltreatment of the village vaityan. All that is changed now, for the Kundara Hospital can by this time hold, at a pinch, a hundred patients, though its official number of beds is only fifty-two.

In the old days, a visit to Kundara meant seeing hundreds of cases in the four or five days, and occasionally clearing out the consulting-room to do operations there, with an interested crowd at the windows. Whenever the basin of water in which we washed our hands had to be changed, it had to be thrown out of the window. This species of water-fight was a grand game, and whilst helping to keep the crowd under control, it used to add to the gaiety of nations. Every now and then a roar of





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laughter and applause would hail the drenching of some local celebrity.

The only place for sterilizing was the dispensary, which had little enough space for its own tremendous amount of work. But with our new buildings, if there is a great deal to be done, the Indian doctor in charge can go on seeing out-patients whilst I operate in the well-built and properly-equipped theatre. The day after the opening ceremony last April, I did thirty-one operations under general or spinal anæsthesia in that operating-theatre. I wonder whether there is any operating-room in the world in which over thirty major cases were dealt with on its first working day? All those thirty-one patients were in real need, and hardly any one of them had the means to get to Neyyoor for the only treatment which could bring him health.

After operations were over that day, several hours were spent in seeing more cases, and especially in examining those which the Indian doctor had selected during his hard day's work with the out-patients. Next day, more patients were seen, and on the fourth day we did another twenty-eight operations. There were still more out-patients to see on the following day, our last at Kundara. The operation cases from among them were told to go to our branch at Kalyapuram, which was our next place of visitation. So we packed up all our goods that night, and by nine o'clock in the morning we were starting work at Kalyapuram with a crowd of sufferers which amazed us by its size.

Kalyapuram Hospital is in a country district, nearly a mile from the village of that name, and looking around the neighbourhood you would think that there were but few people about. But as it is on the main bus route from north to south in Travancore, it is visited by a goodly throng of people. Actually, the largest number of cases I have ever dealt with in a single day was at Kalyapuram. I find that the Indian doctor in charge, with admirable

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foresight, has built a temporary ward holding twenty or thirty people on a flat piece of the compound. Its cost was less than a pound, and it affords adequate shelter for a large number of the less serious cases from the operating-room. That is the great thing about the tropics. The climate is so warm ; all that is wanted is a roof and thatch walls in places, rigged up on bamboo poles, and everyone inside it will be fairly comfortable.

Much the same happens here as at the other branches. Four days are spent in seeing the patients, many of whom have come a long way in the bus to get there, and in doing those operations which are required. Some patients have walked many miles, every step of the way hampered by fever or pain or crippling. Over there on the carriage-drive, the remorseless Indian sun beating down upon their poor, ill bodies, are two patients in beds, who have been carried for miles across country in the hope of relief. One of them we can take into hospital and nurse back to life and health ; the other, alas, is a desperate case, too far gone for human aid. Within a few hours the bed will have become a bier, and the tired and sorrowing bearers will have to carry back the body, now released from suffering by the merciful hand of death. " Too late, too late ; why didn't you bring her before ? " " Oh, sir, to-day was the auspicious day." " If she had come three days ago, we might have saved her life." " Ah, but, sir, the astrologer said that to-day was the only possible one." Thus has another victim fallen to the superstition of the poor, ignorant villagers. We are up against more than mere disease ; we have got to show the people that the auspicious time to see the doctor is always early in the illness. The devil of delay is stronger and more deadly than any of the powers of the inauspicious times.

Off we go early in the morning to Attingal. Here is one of our biggest and most useful branches. It is in a large town, and on a main road, and around it is a dense population. Moreover, it has ample accommodation for

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fifty people, a good operating-room, and several private wards. The Indian doctor here is very business-like and efficient, and has the confidence of a large section of the people for miles around. One of the wards was built two or three years ago by public subscription, and opened by a local magnate. There is always plenty to do at Attingal, and Dr. Samuel and I are hard at it for four or five days, treating all and sundry, from the Tahsildar—the Mayor of the district—to the poor untouchables with their ill-nourished, skinny little children covered with sores and flies. All must have the best we can do for them; rich or poor, each one has some need, and we have got to do everything we can to supply it. For nearly a month, this tour of the branch hospitals goes on; for nearly a month there is no rest for any of the Neyyoor Team, except in brief snatches. The unremitting siege of our little party by suffering and distress, fever and misery, at last draws to a close, and the presence of a few malingerers and *malades imaginaires* among the crowd shows us that we are coming to the end of the really urgent work.

So back to Neyyoor we go late at night, possibly stopping for a bathe on the way, in the lovely warm, green sea-water of Kovalam. To-morrow we must be up early, for the daily round of work at Neyyoor must begin once more. We may think we ought to get a little holiday, but we can't do that. Never mind; April will soon be here, and a few weeks in the cool air of the hills will set us going for another year.

One final word must be said, about the Indian doctors in charge of the branch hospitals during these hectic times. The missionary's visit brings many extra patients to a place, and the doctor in charge has all his ordinary work to do as well as a lot of extra jobs. Each day, before I arrive, he has probably been up for a couple of hours, and has already seen a number of the local sick whose ailments are not very serious. All the time I am at the hospital he is on the go, now giving an anæsthetic, now

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seeing to the comfort of the patients in the wards, now arranging where to put the operation cases in his already overcrowded hospital. After I have finished he will have to see about the clearing up, and the preparation of things for the work of the morrow. Finally, he may have to be up half the night with a maternity case, and someone may fetch him along to go several miles to a jungly village to see some bad typhoid patient, or to save a little child with pneumonia.

But, on the next morning, when I arrive, he is all smiles and cheerfulness and courtesy. There is no impatience; I have no feeling that he is "hot and bothered"; he shows no resentment at the jostling and pushing crowd. They are wonderful men, these South Indians, and nobody could wish for more willing and cheerful helpers than they. I never wear a hat in India, preferring to get God's good ultra-violet rays rather than to avoid the imagined dangers of sunstroke. But if I *had* a hat, I would take it off to these faithful doctors in our branch hospitals.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### LEPROSY CAN BE CURED

HOW MANY LEPERS ARE THERE IN INDIA? THAT IS A thing that nobody knows. Statistics are of little value. Surveys have been carried out in various places by Government and other doctors, in which individual homes were visited and the inmates examined. In most cases these house-to-house visitations have resulted in the discovery that lepers are at least sixteen times as common as the Registrar-General's statistics indicate. That is to say, there are probably not less than 1,500,000 lepers in India to-day.

What is the fate of a leper? To begin with, his disease is contagious, and every villager in India knows that it is so. If one member of a family becomes a leper, he is therefore thrown out of the house, for fear he should contaminate other members. He loses his status in society, his parents and his brothers and sisters, his share of the property, his chance of marrying and building up a family home; everything that makes life worth living. He becomes an outcast, with only two alternatives before him—to beg or to die. His disease, untreated and neglected, gets worse and worse. He goes in search of food or alms from village to village, spreading the leprosy to other people, his life a continual danger to the community and a continual misery to himself. Finally, after months or years of a beggar's existence, the disease may produce horrible sores—his toes or feet, fingers or hands, may drop off or slowly rot away, and he is constantly infested with flies, repulsive to other people, stinking and loathsome; until merciful death at last carries him away.

Of course, the family may not realize that he is a leper

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at all. In many cases, leprosy begins with pale patches of skin, with loss of sensation here and there, but with no pain—and patches may be easily concealed unless they happen to be on the face or hands. So the others may not find it out until too late, when the disease has advanced; and by that time several or all of the family may have become infected. When the leprosy has “burnt itself out” and the patient is no longer a source of danger, the others may send him away, too late to do any good; and the disease goes on in the family.

Now the remarkable thing about leprosy is this: the disease is *personally* contagious, and any leper is a danger to those with whom he is intimately associated. But it requires a close contact, sometimes a long contact, to spread the infection. A leper may sleep on a pillow and infect it. Someone else may sleep on that pillow the next night, and might get leprosy, for his contact with the pillow is prolonged over several hours. But the casual touching of lepers is safe; leprosy cannot be borne by water, like typhoid or cholera, nor by flies, like dysentery. As far as we know, dogs and other animals cannot spread it, nor can the germs be carried by the air, as can tubercle, diphtheria, whooping cough, and so many other diseases. Fleas spread plague and lice spread typhus; but neither spread leprosy. So in leprosy we have a disease which could be stamped out entirely, if only we could isolate all lepers effectively. The trouble is, of course, that isolation has to be done for so many years; moreover, the actual number of lepers in a country like India is very large. Nevertheless, leprosy *can* be stopped by isolation. The Catholic Church in the Middle Ages maintained lazarettos all over Europe, probably to the number of some 20,000. No doubt these asylums were pretty dreadful places; indeed, we have accounts of them which are fairly grim. But they did their job. Leprosy, once rife in Europe, was very nearly stamped out, so that for centuries it has been the rarest possible thing to see a leper in Western Europe.

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I remember the queue we formed as medical students to see a leper in London just before the War. Little did I think in those days that there would come a time when I was in charge of two hundred lepers, seeing several new ones every day, and often obliged to send them away, as our homes were full up.

When I first went out to India, leprosy was reckoned an incurable disease. Dr. Pugh and Samuel, his assistant, were quite excited because they thought they detected slight improvement in three cases (out of many scores) whom they had treated assiduously at the leper home for several years.

Fifty years ago Mrs. Charles Peace gave a Leper Home to Neyyoor, which is still known as the C. P. Memorial Home. For many years it provided an infirmary where some fifty or sixty poor men lived and died, incurable, hopeless, often in pain, many of them limping, others bed-ridden. Poor things, that is all they could do—just carry on in the Leper Home, to die there as soon as the will of God decreed. Yet, among those poor folk, doomed to such a drab and colourless existence, there was a real joy, a delight in singing hymns and doing religious plays, a delight in doing little services for one another and a special love of a "tamash" or a festival such as Christmas. This happiness was largely due to the Christian influence of Mr. Devadasan, the evangelist who managed the Home. Himself a convert from Hinduism, of a caste family, he was thrown out of his community and lost all that this world offers, yet felt such a true joy that he has been capable of spreading it to a long succession of lepers in the home at Neyyoor. Scores, perhaps hundreds, of men in Travancore to-day are happy because of the devoted and cheerful ministrations of Devadasan.

But, as I say, in 1922 there was no cure for leprosy. Any who came into our Leper Home knew that they came there for life. Little by little, however, a cure was evolved. The old chaulmoogra oil, which has been the traditional

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Indian medicine for leprosy for hundreds of years, did not cure the disease, although it alleviated it. But the researches of Sir Leonard Rogers, and more especially of Dr. Muir, himself a medical missionary, established a new treatment. This consists in the injection of fairly large quantities of a certain oil called hydnocarpus which, fortunately, is very cheap in Travancore, where it has been used for many years as a lamp oil. If done in the proper way, the injection of this oil once or twice a week has become a really wonderful thing. For leprosy is no longer an incurable disease. Our leper patients are no longer doomed to stay in an infirmary for the rest of their lives. Our Leper Home is no more a living grave. True, some of the advanced cases will never get a chance of cure; but the earlier and slighter cases will every one see their homes again, if they adhere faithfully to the treatment. At the present time, we can practically guarantee a cure for every leper who has not had his complaint more than five years. It may take a long time—six months, a year, even two years—but so long as the disease has not been established for more than four or five years, the patient has every chance of going home again, with a certificate in his pocket saying that he is free from all danger to his fellow-men.<sup>1</sup> Think what that means to the leper, who, a few years ago, was condemned to realize that his disease was incurable.

Exercise and work are always beneficial to a leper under treatment, and help to make his treatment effective. We could not give our lepers exercise to any extent as long as they were confined to a small asylum with only an acre of ground around it. As soon, therefore, as it was realized that, under modern treatment, leprosy is curable, we started to make plans for a new and more up-to-date Leper Home, built in a style that admitted fresh air, and in a large compound of several acres in which foot-

<sup>1</sup> Nobody is sent home until three pathological examinations have proved to be negative to leprosy bacilli. These examinations are done on all patients at intervals of three months.



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ball and other games could be played, and gardening and fruit-growing could provide employment and exercise for the patients. Fortunately, we found that the London Missionary Society had a fund, invested some years before, of about two thousand pounds, ear-marked for Leper work. This was an absolute godsend, and the greater part of it has already been used to build and equip a new Leper Home some two miles from Neyyoor. The ground was purchased, the buildings planned, the basement began to appear above ground, and then the trouble began.

First the people in the nearest village, headed by one, Peter, who reckoned himself their leader, came along with a petition that the Leper Home should not be built, as being a danger to their village. As Peter was talking to Mr. Harlow, our business manager, he lifted up his shirt to scratch his chest; lo and behold—on his body was a leprous patch! Harlow lost no time in pointing this out to the astonished villagers. The whole thing became a huge joke, and Peter has ever since been under treatment for leprosy as an out-patient. He is now one of our best friends.

Then various landowners in the neighbourhood, fearing that the proximity of a leper settlement would send down the value of their property for building purposes, got together and proceeded to terrorize the country-folk who live round about. "If this Leper Home is built, and lepers live in it, the whole district will be infected. The water in the paddy-fields near by will teem with leprosy. The town of Colachel, a mile away, will be unable to dip up water from its wells without fear of infection. This Leper Home must be stopped!" A mass meeting was called, and I went to it with one of our medical men. We told the assembled crowd that leprosy was not carried by water; that, so long as they kept lepers out of their homes, they could not get leprosy; that we would dress the lepers in distinctive clothes in order to safeguard the countryside, and that there was no more danger of getting leprosy in

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Colachel than in London, except from lepers who were already in Colachel itself. Speeches were made on the other side, in which it was said that all this was a pack of lies, and that there were *no* lepers in Colachel. As a matter of fact, we were treating several lepers from Colachel as out-patients at that time, but the mass meeting affected not to believe that.

The building went on, but it was not long before a case was taken against us in the courts, in the form of an injunction to prevent us from building. This, of course, hurried the building up, and the form of the injunction changed, when the buildings were finished, to an attempt to prevent us from putting lepers to live in them. Acting on the advice of our lawyer, we hurried down a few lepers to live in the homes before they were quite finished. At the next hearing of the case, our shrewd lawyer pointed out that, as lepers were already living in the buildings, an injunction to keep them out was useless, and only an injunction to *get* them out was of any avail. So the case was disposed of on this technical point, and we invited the Dewan (prime minister) of Travancore formally to open the Leper Home. The ceremony was arranged, and the opposition tried their hardest to prevent it. Mr. Austin, the Dewan, wisely approached the Maha Raja of the State to get his approval of the Home, and as was to be expected of the ruler of an enlightened State like Travancore, His Highness signified his approval, so everything was all right.

On the opening day, in November 1933, a large mob of people, carrying black flags and torches, tried to break in to the new leper compound, intending to set fire to the hall in which the ceremony was to take place. Mr. Harlow and a few policemen managed to keep them back, and did a really gallant piece of work in doing so successfully, a handful of men against many hundreds, until the arrival of the Dewan. The opening ceremony took place, the new inhabitants of the Leper Home gave an exhibition of their cheery and fascinating dances, and we all went back to

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Neyyoor, running the gauntlet of stones hurled at us in the gathering darkness by the opposing forces of anarchy. Few stones actually hit the cars or their occupants, and we all reached Neyyoor alive and well. My old car still bears some dents and scratches as honourable scars from this conflict. But nobody was really bad-tempered about it, and everything settled down peacefully in the end.

This new Leper Home consists of four big dormitories for twenty patients each, and a large central hall for meetings, built in the South Indian style. Kitchens, bathrooms, sanitary area with septic tanks, and other buildings complete a healthy and modern Leper Settlement which at present holds eighty-eight patients, but is being extended. The lepers are able in this Home to get both treatment and exercise, and many of them are quite keen on gardening. Most of the vegetables used in the Settlement are home-grown. Dr. Abraham, who lives in a house in the corner of the compound, has given up a private practice and devoted his life to the care of these lepers, and Harlow is responsible for the management of the Home. Peter, who led the first opposition against us, is now our friend, and provides us (at a price, of course) with firewood and other necessities. The hand of God seems to have been with us all along, and already (1936) we have sent several scores of patients home from our new Settlement, cured and free from all symptoms of the disease which was once considered incurable.

At Christmas the lepers have a great time. For weeks beforehand, they rehearse a drama, cut up paper flags and streamers for decoration, and practise their Kalial, or dances. A present is given to every one. Woollen scarves are especially appreciated, and are used for keeping their heads warm at night. An Indian is very particular about the warmth of his head; the body does not seem to matter, and many of them take their shirts off at night and wind them round their heads. A meeting is held, with plenty of songs, accompanied by a tom-tom played by a

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chap whose hands are so crippled by leprosy that he can't show great skill at it, poor fellow. Then comes the play, usually a Biblical story with embellishments. Indians love long entertainments, and the story of Dives and Lazarus, for instance, has to be filled in a bit if it is to last three or four hours. We are shown Dives's immoral relations with Lazarus's wife, his last illness, for which various quacks are called in and finally sent about their business by a not very realistic medical missionary; his death, followed by the taking away of his big, black, cardboard soul by six small black devils. Then there has to be a post-mortem, and a good many quarrels over his property. The police are ostentatiously squared lest a verdict of foul play be given at the inquest—these and many other incidents fill in the time and provide amusement. Finally, Lazarus dies, presumably of rabies contracted from the dogs licking his sores. His pink-and-white soul (also cardboard) is removed by suitable cherubs. The inevitable buffoon, invariable accompaniment to a Tamil drama, is introduced in the shape of Dives's servant—a veritable Leslie Henson. The whole gives us several hours of real entertainment. And so to bed, after a firework display has wound up the proceedings.

One of the lepers at the new Home was a bit of a grumbler. He was of fairly decent family, but had been in the old Home some time; he didn't like the new Home, in spite of its far more commodious buildings and amenities, for he had to do a little work, and in the old place his food had been cooked for him. So he got a bit cheeky. The obvious thing to do was to put him in charge of one of the houses, a plan which worked well for a year or so. But one day he felt particularly outraged by society in general—nobody knows exactly why—and told Harlow that if his grievance wasn't satisfied he would call a strike. He had a good deal of influence with the other lepers, who had not been in the Home so long. Accordingly, I was sitting down to dinner with my wife that evening when my

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house-boy announced that the lepers were outside and wanted to see me. I went out and found the whole eighty of them, grown men and little boys, having walked the two miles from the Home, all carrying their possessions, even down to the monkey they kept as a pet. "What do you want?" I asked. Not a word. They just looked around rather stupidly. "What's all this about?" Still not a word. "Are you on strike?" Then at last—"Yes, we've walked out. We are not going back to the Leper Home." "Why not?" Dead silence. (I very much doubt whether they knew what it was all about. I'm quite certain *I* didn't.) "Look here," I said, in Tamil, "I don't know what you're here for, but if you don't like the Leper Home, you can go away. We don't mind; we run it for your benefit, to get you cured. We give you free food and clothes and everything else, provided only that you do a bit of gardening, draw the water, and play games. But if you don't like it, you can go home. There are hundreds more lepers who will be only too pleased to get into the Home, and in a few days it will be full again. If you don't want to be cured of leprosy, go home. But there is one man" (indicating the grumbler) "that *must* go home. We won't have him in the Leper Settlement again. The others can do just what they like."

Poor chaps!—they were completely nonplussed. They hadn't expected that; in fact, they really didn't know what they were there for, except that they had been told to go out by our grouching friend. Harlow and I went down to the Leper Home in a car, and found one solitary leper there, left behind because he didn't see the use of it all. So we went to the kitchens, and saw that the fires were burning and the cauldrons of rice boiling. We ordered that a hot meal for eighty people should be got ready and served to the wanderers when they had returned, for we were sure that they would all go back to the Leper Home. During our return journey to Neyyoor we met the whole lot, in twos and threes, still carrying their possessions and

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looking very sheepish. In the morning, we went down there again, and found that every single one had gone back, except the grumbler and two of his pals, all three bad hats, of whom we were glad to have seen the last. They salaamed and bowed and scraped and asked for pardon. I told them to cheer up, as there was nothing to forgive, and not to allow anyone to make fools of them again. So all ended happily, and the most fatuous strike in history is not likely to be repeated. The one thing a Southern Indian detests more than anything else is to be made a fool of.

Now once more the lepers are happy in their games and their work, and one of the pleasantest things which you can do at Neyyoor is to pay a visit to the Leper Home and cheer them up with a little chaffing, and then get them to do one of their skilful and jolly dances. As the clouds drift across the moon and the Indian night draws on, the swiftly-moving figures of eight boys, clicking their sticks together, go in and out of the little circle around a flaring lamp, dancing a Kalial.

Fifty years ago, they would have been doomed to be lepers for life, outcast from home, to die as beggars in the streets. Ten years ago, the best they could hope for was to live and die in an infirmary. But now, every one of them, and seventy-odd of their fellows, will be back home within a year or two, fit and active, not spoiled by inaction, but able-bodied and capable of earning their own curry and rice and of taking their place in the life of the family and of the nation.

Thank God for the cure of leprosy.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### EPIDEMICS—CHOLERA AND MALARIA

EVERY YEAR THERE IS AN EPIDEMIC OF CHOLERA IN SOUTH Travancore.<sup>1</sup> Usually only a few cases are recorded—it may be a hundred or rather more—and after three or four weeks' duration the cholera settles down and disappears for another year. This occurs regularly in January and February; and generally by the month of March all the cholera has disappeared. But in 1928, though the initial epidemic in February was a mild one, it never stopped. Each week there would be a case here and there. In June the usual monsoon broke with a deluge of rain; instead of lasting two months or more, it was over in a week. In July and August the fertile fields were dry and cracking; the paddy, usually waving in the wind, was little higher than stubble; the watercourses and, above all, the great reservoir at Pechiparai, which supplies all South Travancore with water, ran dry. The crops over a large area failed utterly, and over a larger one were much below the average. Many of the poorer people are absolutely dependent on the crop of rice for their livelihood; its harvesting brings them their only regular wages in the year, and its price controls their nourishment. So that year thousands of these poor folk lacked the money to buy their staple food. They got thinner and thinner, and the ravages of hookworm and anæmia made them unhealthy as well as thin. It was pathetic sometimes in the country districts to see the appalling malnutrition. But they survived—for the most part, at any rate. Not many died of famine.

<sup>1</sup> Much of this chapter is reprinted, by kind permission of Messrs. William Blackwood & Sons, Ltd., from *Tales from the Outposts*.

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but thousands were rendered weak and emaciated and just hung on. And all the time the cholera hung on, too—the monsoon had failed to wash it away. In North Travancore, which had had a good monsoon, there was not a single case; but it persisted in the south, waiting for the suitable soil on which to grow, the soil of starving and enfeebled humanity.

And then—in September and October, and still more in November—it got hold. At first scores, then hundreds of cases were reported each week. The Travancore Government detailed several medical men for special cholera duty, with cars and a stock of remedies. It was very soon evident that they could not cope with the progress of the disease. Each had a large area to work, and could not spare time to go far off the main roads. They usually stopped only at the houses by the roadside, giving a bottle of medicine and some disinfectant. In early November the country-folk were getting frightened. At some of the more inaccessible villages, two or three miles from the road, men, women, and especially children were dying like flies. We, in a large Mission Hospital, on the border of the district where the cholera was at its worst, were busy all day long dealing with hundreds of sufferers from all sorts of complaints, neglected or more often maltreated by the native vaityans. The suffering within our walls was insistent, and called as ever for all the time and skill and energy we could bestow. But here, within a few miles of our gates, was something frightful. For cholera is the most terrible of all diseases. A man may come in from the field for his midday meal fit and well and be dead before nightfall. His family may bury him that night and sicken of the dreaded cholera before the next day is out; if untreated, four out of every five cases die. And this was going on in hundreds of homes. How could we best reinforce the roadside work of the Government doctors? On the first day Harlow, with an Indian doctor and an orderly, went out to the area with his motor-bike and side-



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car. They returned that evening with the news that the cholera was far worse in the isolated villages than we supposed. So our Mission car, with a doctor and an orderly and a large box of medicines, went next day. Sometimes we had two cars out.

We used to go along the roads, calling out every half-mile or so, "Is the cholera here?"

"Yes, in the next house."

"Government doctor been round?"

"Not to-day, but he came yesterday."

We dismount and look at the case. It is a new one, just begun an hour ago. We take his name and age and give him a bottle of medicine—"sixty drops in that much water every hour from now till evening." They do not understand, so we give him his first dose, holding up his poor weak body with one hand and pouring the medicine down his throat with the other. The family have got to carry on. "Good-bye. Don't be frightened. This is the best medicine in the world."

"There is some cholera in a village over there, two miles off the road. Thirty cases died last week, and there are over twenty new ones to-day."

"Right you are, we'll come; but one of you must show us where the cholera is."

Back to the car for some more medicine and a hat, and the two or three of us tramp across the scorching ground, sometimes under the welcome shade of coco-nut palms, the orderly carrying on his head the box of medicines and disinfectants. At last we arrive at the village; but where is our guide? Is this the right place? Not a soul about; not a door open. There at last we see the man who was showing us the way; he has stopped a hundred yards back.

"Heh, come on; is this the place?"

"Yes, but I can't come any nearer or the cholera devil will get me."

"Come on, man, don't be a fool; we're going into the

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houses, and all we want to know is which houses to go into."

After much persuasion he shows us the first house. It is all shut up, and there is no sound but a faint wailing within. They will not open the door—it might be the devil knocking and waiting to claim another victim. So we have to force it open and go inside. It is a small house, consisting, as do most houses in South Travancore, of a tiny courtyard surrounded by four small verandas. Under one the rice is kept in a large box—but this year the box is empty. Under another is the entrance to two small rooms, 6 feet by 8; on the other there sits, wailing and rocking to and fro, the old granny. That bundle by her side is her youngest grandchild. Her son stands by, a spade in his hand, with tears in his eyes and anguish on his face, ready to go out and dig the grave of his only boy who six hours ago was a cheery little chap; but where is the patient? "In there," he tells us, a break in his voice and a tear trickling down his cheek. We bend down and go in at the low door, and there is his poor wife, pinched and emaciated, terror and pain on her face. She is too dazed to realize the loss of her little boy; for she herself has got to fight for her own life, quickly ebbing out with the awful vomiting and diarrhoea, which take every drop of moisture from the body and leave the flesh shrivelled and the blood so thick that it will hardly flow. We are just in time. She still has a pulse, and hastily scrubbing up, we are able to make a little fire of dead leaves and heat our kettle of saline. Soon we have fixed the tube in a vein and the thick blood is being diluted and made to flow; for she is to have four pints of salt solution. It takes rather long, but in ten minutes the pulse is stronger, and in ten more she is looking about, and when we are done she is sitting up, with a good pulse, the danger past for a time at any rate. A little bottle of medicine is then produced, and we give her a dose and tell the old granny how to carry on.

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No time can be wasted, and we must press on to the next case. So we quickly gather up our goods and go out. Over there is the poor chap digging away. On the ground beside him is the little bundle that only yesterday was his hope and his pride. We say a word to him, and it is a joy to see his face, half sceptical but half hoping, and trusting on the whole that we *have* helped his wife back again over that thorny hedge that is the boundary between life and death. We will see him again to-morrow, and his young wife may be over the danger then. There is no cholera next door, but across a tapioca field a hundred yards away there are said to be five cases. Again the house is shut up, and our guide keeps a respectful distance. We knock at the door, which is fortunately so ramshackle that we can draw the bolt without waiting for an answer. Not a soul to be seen! But we think we hear some groans, and go into one of the little rooms. There is the father, vomiting on the floor where lies his little girl, half dead and shrivelled and cold. Her two little brothers are there, four and five years old. One of them is fairly warm and has a good pulse. We are told he was taken bad yesterday, and he has obviously got over the worst. The other will no more run after his father with the sickle in his hand, for the reaper has come and gathered him not many minutes ago into the terrible harvest. The poor wife is very bad, but she has a pulse of sorts; and the other little baby is lying across her chest crying and wondering what it all means. There is nobody to help them, for nobody will go near the place: the cholera devil is there. So the father, himself tortured with cramps and now and then vomiting the water which is his very life-blood, pulls himself together and watches as we give to each a suitable dose of medicine, and listens as we tell him just how much medicine to give each case. We give him some too, and say it all over again just to make sure he understands. If only one of us could stay in the house and help them; but we cannot do that. There are scores of lives to be

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saved, and we must leave the poor fellow to carry on. (As a matter of fact, he did carry on, and saved the lives of every one of his family before he himself died and left them orphans. Now the mother is working a bit, and the children have a little—how little, but just enough—to live on. There is more real bravery in some of these families than ever won a Military Cross.)

Next door a fine strapping youth is laid low by the disease, but hopeful; and a little persuasion will move his old mother to give him the medicines properly, and a rupee will enable her to get a bit of rice. She can eat the rice and give him the water it was boiled in. But where are the rest of the family? They have fled, no one knows whither, to live perhaps in the open fields till the devil has left their home. And so we go on from house to house, leaving a bottle of medicine in each with brief instructions for its use, in case any member of the family should be attacked; and always giving the first dose ourselves to any case that is not beyond hope of recovery. Thirty-seven cases in that village, three dead; fifteen died yesterday. But we must go on, for we have just heard that there are a lot of cases in another place only half a mile across the fields. We are just leaving when our guide points to a little hut made of coco-nut leaves, not much bigger than a kennel.

“Any cases there?”

“Yes, three or four.”

“Why didn’t you tell us about them before?”

“Oh, they’re only pariahs.”

“Never mind; they’re human beings like ourselves.”

We go in, while our guide stares open-eyed at such unorthodox doctrine; and there on the mud floor are a man and his wife and two children, all stark-naked, for they cannot afford clothes; all half starved, for the price of rice is high, and very little work comes their way. Three of them have cholera, the husband and the two children; so with great difficulty (for she is so jungly that she hardly

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understands Tamil, even as it is spoken by our orderly) we explain to the wife how to give the medicine, and ourselves give the first dose to each. We wonder—will she carry on? Does she understand? Or does she think the devils will take charge whether the medicine be given or not? We give her enough money to buy some rice, and leave them in hopes that she *will* carry on. For we must be going, or some lives will be lost that only our treatment can save.

The village half a mile away turns out to be a mile and a half; but that is the way of the East. (Personally I always multiply the reputed distance by  $3\frac{1}{2}$ , and find the result fairly accurate.) Anyway, we eventually arrive there, and find, as before, all the houses shut up and not a soul out-of-doors. At length we invade a house, and by dint of promising a good bottle of cholera medicine, get a man to come along and show us which houses have got the cholera. There is an old woman in the first, fairly bad—she will probably die, but in any case she is not long for this world. The next house has two patients, a little boy and his mother, neither of them very bad. They only began this morning, but the mother is in terror, for yesterday two of the family died, although they went to the local medicine-man and got a Kashayam (herb mixture) from him. We wonder whether “although” ought not to be “because.” Perhaps not; for these Kashayams have one virtue—though they *never* do good, they only *sometimes* do actual harm. We calm the mother, telling her that this stuff of ours is God’s medicine, a statement heartily echoed by the rest of the family, who persuade her to drink some. One of her brothers once had an operation at our hospital, and that is a recommendation for our mixture. After giving the medicine and the usual instructions, and leaving an extra bottle for the use of the next case to start in that household, we go on to the adjoining house—a tiny one-roomed affair, very dirty and obviously very poor. A thin woman is lying on the floor, her head resting on her little

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baby. I am on the point of protesting when I stoop to feel the little child and find it is dead and cold. All the rest of the family are dead—two of them died yesterday, the others the day before—and there is nobody left to bury the little baby, so why should she not use it as a pillow? It will not be long before she joins her little child, for she is very far gone: she has no pulse and is gasping for breath. She is past any remedies. Over there in a field are two men digging a grave. We tell them to make it a bit bigger, for it will have three to hold instead of one. Here in the next house is an elderly woman—very weak pulse, but not frightfully cold yet, so we had better give her an intravenous saline. A fire is soon made, our instruments are soon boiling, and in half an hour, when I return from seeing a few other cases and finishing off the village, all is ready. Within another half-hour she has had three pints of the best, and is really alive again. We were just in time; within an hour she would have been too bad to save.

To the next group of houses is "a furlong." About ten minutes' rapid walking gets us there, and we find a few more tragedies, a few more whose lives we can reclaim, a few who are hopeful (to us, at any rate, but to themselves almost hopeless; and who can wonder, considering the appalling death-rate of untreated cholera?), and everywhere we find the same shut-up houses; the people listless and awed, even in the homes where the disease has not yet begun; all struck dumb and hopeless and inactive by the fear of the cholera. A few more odd houses here and there are visited, and we return to the car. It is now getting dark, so we cannot do much more to-day; but we have seen something of the extent of the epidemic in a small area, and have left in the houses enough medicine to deal with the next day's cases. We must go a bit farther in search of another stricken district to visit to-morrow. We have not far to go. Four miles along the road we find a group of villages two miles from the beaten

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track, and pay a brief visit to them in the dusk, leaving medicine where we can, and the assurance that we will go there first thing in the morning.

We dare not eat with our hands covered with cholera germs, but a good wash in permanganate drives away the danger, and the bread and plantains we have brought with us are soon washed down with coco-nut-water or coffee. On the way back we distribute our medicine along the roadside and see a few more cases in the gathering darkness, and in due course we arrive home in Neyyoor—to a well-earned rest? Not a bit of it; for there are the hospital patients to see and the operations to arrange for to-morrow. A large Medical Mission cannot be left entirely to itself, even for cholera; so to-morrow I am to do operations, and one of our keen young Indian doctors will do the cholera, with two orderlies. He did it very well, and saw over seventy new cases in the district we had spotted on the previous day, and his one comment as he reported progress to me in the evening was, "Sir, it is pathetic."

Next day I am for the road with the two nursing orderlies and a larger stock of drugs than ever. The first thing to do is to visit the villages we went to see two days ago, and this we do straight away. But what a change! The houses are open; some of the men are working in the fields; some are sad and bereaved, but the listless, awed look has gone. We are greeted by the lads of the village running out to meet us and offering to carry our things. We see people going from one house to another, and no longer shutting themselves in and their neighbours out. Why is all this? Simply because they now have hope. Before, they were left to themselves. They could not fight the devils single-handed; so they just gave it up as a bad job and shut themselves up, resigned to fate. But now help has come. Many of the cases we had treated two days before have got better; several have died, it is true, but not many, far fewer than had died three or four days ago when they had no help and no interest. We find the

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woman to whom we had given saline is now up and about—weak beyond words, but alive and doing a little to prepare her husband's food. There are a few new cases, but most of them have taken our medicine early, and the majority are doing pretty well.

Soon we went on, at a run to save time, to the next village, and here was the same story; the aimless, helpless, hopeless, drivelling attitude was gone, and everyone was active, listening more intelligently to our instructions about the medicines, and helping the cases with greater zeal. This change in attitude of the whole village life is perhaps the most amazing thing I have ever seen. I never before appreciated what a great thing hope is. Faith and charity we are apt to take for granted as wonderful things; but here was the whole life of a community completely changed from the listlessness of despair to activity and intelligence by hope. They were no longer lonely. The Sahib and his little band would see them from time to time and help them. The medicine—yes, it was God's medicine, for it was the only medicine they had yet seen that could do anything against cholera. (It should be mentioned that the medicine we used almost entirely in this epidemic was "Tomb's Mixture," the efficacy of which can best be judged by this fact: in one village in which we followed up all cases treated, out of seventy-eight cases personally visited and provided with Tomb's Mixture within a few hours of the actual beginning of cholera, only five died. Of fifteen cases not personally visited but provided with the mixture by friends, six died. The death-rate of untreated cholera is 60-80 per cent., and of cholera treated with permanganate plus intravenous saline is 20 per cent.)

After visiting these old friends of ours, we rapidly went on to make new acquaintances. A whole area was as yet unvisited, two miles from the nearest road, and in one village we knew the deaths had been frightful. We went along the road for ten miles or so, and stopped at the house of the local pastor (a real good sort) who was to spend all



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his time for several weeks to come fighting the cholera and cheering his jungly parishioners and their Hindu neighbours. He took us along an interminable path, hot, rough, and in every possible way taking the longest possible route—to the first of these villages, some two and a half miles from his house. Here, as before, we saw the hopelessness of despair, the shut doors, the listless attitude, the empty fields. And here, as before, we came across tragedy after tragedy. Many otherwise hopeless cases were brought back to a good prospect of recovery, and many homes were saved from despair by a bottle of medicine. Some six or seven villages were visited that day, and a glorious bathe in the sea refreshed us before we went home in the gathering darkness. And so back we went over twenty miles or so of road, our cheery orderlies singing lustily as the car brought us home. Next day we revisited the same places, and once again saw the same change—despair changed to hope, fecklessness turned to energy, helplessness to comparative cheeriness, closed doors to open houses, and an eager welcome.

So it went on day after day, week after week, until, about two months later, the cholera gradually died out, and instead of spending whole days at it, we went, if called for, to one village or another where the cholera was still raging. In January the epidemic ceased; during February only desultory cases occurred, and once more we were free to give full attention to the crowded hospital.

Towards the end of 1935 there was another epidemic of cholera in Travancore; but this time the Government Medical Service did much more useful work, in both quality and quantity, and there was not nearly so much left for the Mission to do. As I was home on furlough at this time, Dr. Orr was left single-handed at Neyyoor, and could not do so much relief work as he would have liked. The greater part was done by Solomon, one of our senior orderlies, who risked his life daily by visiting many cases of this terribly infectious and fatal disease. He soon became an expert at

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intravenous transfusion and gained the confidence of the whole countryside, so that people would send for him at all hours and refuse to have anyone else. One day he had been out tramping the country carrying a load and with his assistants treating forty cases, getting back at night dead tired. About midnight he was sent for again to go to a village four miles away where there were three bad cases. He went out by car, walking the last part of the way, gave three intravenous transfusions, and came home in the early morning ; and was out the following day on his usual round.

Dr. Orr tells a striking story of perseverance in a desperate case.

“ One night about 10.30, after I had had a hard day in the operating theatre, a small group of people arrived on my veranda and insisted that I should go out with them to a village five miles away where a man lay at the point of death with cholera. I was inclined to persuade them to call someone else, as I felt I had done more than a day's work and was entitled to a night's rest. They would take no refusal, however, and after collecting intravenous apparatus from the hospital we set out. I found a prosperous-looking merchant in a well-appointed house, almost pulseless and obviously very ill. We opened the vein in his arm and gave him three pints of hypertonic saline, after which he appeared to be better. The next night we were called again, for he had collapsed once more. Again we went out and gave another two pints. All day, of course, they had been administering the usual anti-cholera medicines. The following day the report was more favourable, but on the fourth day we were sent for once more because his condition was again serious. For the third time we transfused him and for the third time he rallied. From that day forward he made steady progress and within a fortnight he was back at work. One interesting example of the effect of fear was shown in the young brother of this case. He was obviously very excited and perturbed, and all the time I was in the house he kept jumping up and down, beating his breast and

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calling upon God. I remarked to my assistant that if that fellow took cholera he would get it badly. The day after the older man began to recover, the younger man fell ill, and died within a few hours, before help could be brought.

"For two months the epidemic raged, taking its toll of lives, but it never reached the immense proportions of the 1929 epidemic because of the very comprehensive preventive measures taken by the Government Medical Department. It was a splendid opportunity for our young men to do a piece of real Christian service, and we are happy and proud that the public placed such confidence in them."

Besides these epidemics of cholera, a disease which spreads like wildfire, is rapidly fatal, and presents a succession of real emergencies, malaria occurs now and then in epidemic form. Malaria is always with us, and the prevention schemes which are nowadays considered effective are of little use in Travancore. A large proportion of the land is given up to paddy-fields. Rice grows under water, and thousands of square miles of Travancore are therefore bound to be under water for part of the year. These fields provide a magnificent breeding-ground for the mosquito larvæ, and the cost of spraying them with paraffin to kill the larvæ would be prohibitive. To introduce fish to kill the larvæ is equally impossible, as the fields often dry up, and the fish would then die. So mosquitoes, and with them malaria, remain with us always, and I know many villages where every single inhabitant is a chronic malarial case. Occasionally, as in 1935, this malaria assumes the form of an epidemic, a new and virulent strain of the infection suddenly spreading over a large area. We first heard of this epidemic from the medical man at one of our branch hospitals. Hundreds of cases were coming to him, and his quinine was nearly exhausted. Off we went, Harlow and I, in a car to see how things were, and found that there was a rapid spread of malaria over a district which formerly had been fairly free from it. In the central village of this district we had no hospital, but a small house, where the doctor from

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our nearest branch went once a day to see patients. This dark and inadequate little place had become, within a few days, the centre of a population where malaria was rampant. It was obvious that one doctor could not do the work, as well as looking after his own hospital. So we sent down an extra dispenser, and for several days I worked there myself, together with the Indian doctor.

We saw over three hundred cases a day, and treated them with quinine if they could take it, otherwise with atebrian musonate, which is an injectable drug, of good temporary effect. This latter was given us by its manufacturers to be tried out by experiment, and proved to be of value in a certain type of case. Every day, hundreds of patients came; and a lot more, lying delirious and feverish on the mud floors of their little, damp huts, had sent a child or a relation to fetch the quinine for them. Quinine mixtures of various sorts flowed like a stream out of that little dispensary, and must have brought health to thousands of people who otherwise had no help. The Government hospitals near the affected area were working hard as well, and our little temporary house dealt with over twenty-six thousand cases in a few months. One after another the medical men contracted malaria, carrying on their work in spite of fever. I got it myself, and did the same, so I can sympathize with them. We had to change the medical men every month to avoid overstrain, and I must say that they carried on magnificently in a truly unselfish and Christian service.

Anyone who sits for ten hours a day in a small and poky little house, seeing patients as hard as he can, one after another, in a hot, damp climate, streaming with sweat, surrounded by hundreds of clamouring villagers, each of whom wants his turn to come first, deserves our respect. Two or three of the Indian doctors did this every day for a month, themselves feverish with malaria for part of the time. Each week-end, Harlow and some of the orderlies would go down there and give a hand. Beside the centre

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to which patients came for medicine, there were, we knew, thousands of cases in their homes in the countryside. A young man called Alexander, on our dispensary staff, had to tramp about in the rough country taking quinine to the houses where the patients were incapacitated by illness, and covered many miles every day in this way. Often he found families where every member was prostrated by fever—there was no work, therefore no money, nor food; and even if there had been food there was nobody fit to cook it. Many of the little huts where the outcaste labourers lived were mere thatched sheds, letting in the rain until it formed pools on the floor. Those who had malaria were often lying in the water or the mud, to add to their misery of fever and starvation. It was not only medical aid they wanted, but very often general help and food. Rice was carried to them, and sometimes clothing or fuel was brought along. Several of the village boys from Neyyoor, as well as volunteers from the hospital staff, joined in this work. One of them sent a letter to me, in which he says:

“I have done 4,000 cases of malaria” (apart from the 26,000 treated in the house already mentioned). “I usually go to the far interior places where the Government people would not think of going at all. I distribute rice, medicines, and clothes to the destitute and very helpless. Many of the cases suffer from relapses, and now there are many new cases also. The main cause for the utmost suffering is want of food. I do feel very sorry when I see the Government rice distributors sell the rice and swell their purses, while a large number that ought to get the rice given to them do not find even a grain to prevent them starving. I have distributed five sacks of rice and I am pretty sure that even the last handful of rice has gone to the very destitute.”

It should be mentioned that this implies no lack of good intention on the part of the Government of Travancore, which did everything it possibly could for the relief of this epidemic. It simply shows a thing we are constantly seeing

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in India : that, however good the Government's schemes of relief, when they are entrusted to underlings who have a heathen background to their lives, and have not got the Christian ideal of service, these people are apt to be on the make, and to frustrate thereby a great deal of good work which might otherwise be done.

Many people consider that missions interfere too much in things that Governments ought to do. Many are of opinion that medical and educational work in a country like India should be done by the Government (as indeed they are) and that missions should not do them at all. But the instance just mentioned shows the contribution that can be made by Christian missions and by them alone—the Christian regard for one's fellow-men which is an incentive to do every task conscientiously. I know only too well that a few of our Medical Mission staff are on the make, and doing very much the sort of thing that is objected to in this chapter. I know pretty well who they are, too. But men like that have not got away from their heathen ancestry ; they have not learned what Christian ethics are. Though never despairing of their future, and of their potentialities, one has got to reckon that at the present time they are simply not Christian. All the same, I am not pessimistic. The secret of life, if you are in the position I am in, is to expect the best from other people, your fellow-workers, or whoever they may be. If you expect the best, you may be let down sometimes, but if you expect dirty work, you'll get it. Trust creates trustworthiness ; suspicion invites deceit.

## CHAPTER XXV

### SOME OF OUR PATIENTS

IN THIRTEEN YEARS WE HAVE DEALT WITH SUCH A TREMENDOUS number of patients at Neyyoor—to say nothing of the branch hospitals and leper homes—that it is difficult to pick out those whose story is particularly worth telling. Every single case is a human being with all the feelings and thoughts, passions and energies common to mankind. To each his entry into hospital is something of great importance, of life or death. The treatment of every one has an element of the dramatic. When one spends year after year in doing operations and other things to relieve the suffering of thousands, it is very easy to forget that “in an operating-theatre the most important person is the patient, not the surgeon,” as Lord Moynihan put it. What family tragedy, what personal drama lies hidden beneath a cheerful face, or a patient resignation, or a sullen grumbling? In nine cases out of ten, we know nothing of it. But it's there. Occasionally we find out the real history of a case, the real background of a life, the events, tragic or comic, which led the patient to seek relief.

One of the first of my patients at Neyyoor, about whom I really got to know anything beyond his disease and family circumstances, was a tubercular case called V—. He was not very bad, and came to Neyyoor for another condition for which I operated. Some months later, I went over to his home, which was in rather a damp, steamy place. At his house, well-built and beautifully furnished with carvings and good carpentry, I met all the family. They were suave and polite, as Indians usually are, and

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made me feel completely at home. At sunset, suddenly all conversation stopped, and two little children of three or four years old turned towards the lovely red sky in the west, kneeling down and folding their hands. They then repeated the name " Rama " a hundred times or so, and went back to play with their marbles and mud-pies. It was a delightful family, and typical of many whom I have met since. Politeness and religion (albeit of a superstitious nature) seemed to come quite naturally to them all.

V—— came back to Neyyoor a few months later, with tubercular glands. I took out a number of these, and for some years he was well again. But suddenly he developed acute tubercle of the lungs (and probably of everything else), and died rapidly. The family was completely bereft—was he not the only son? The father was getting old, and who would be able to perform the rites at his burial, which only a son can do? Without V—— to crack his skull and let out the spirit, what was his chance in the next world, or in the next incarnation? Poor man, he was desperate. His wife hadn't produced a child lately, except for the two little girls. So out she went. He must get a son at all costs, and one or two temporary wives were tried, to see if they could bear one. The death of my friend and patient was thus not merely a loss of his company, but a cause of disruption and misery in what had before been a peaceful and happy family; and all because of a superstition.

A rude shock I got near the beginning of my service was from my munshi, the teacher who taught me Tamil. I was practising conversation with him, and we had got on to the subject of missionaries. We were discussing a fellow-worker in the Mission, when the munshi said: " Of course, he only became one (a missionary) because he was somewhat useless for anything else." Knowing full well that the man in question could have got many good jobs in the world of business if he had not felt a call to be a missionary, I told him this. It was received with incredulity. " When I was a boy at



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college, we thought that only those people who are useless for business or Government service became missionaries," was the reply. He could hardly believe that missionaries were sincere, and had in many cases taken on the job from a sense of real vocation, although they might have been far more prosperous in other walks of life. He knew that I had myself become a missionary, though, as a doctor, I could have earned ten times a missionary's salary; but he had explained that to himself by assuming that my father must be a millionaire, and refused to believe otherwise. I told him that missionaries had to go before a committee, and fill in papers about their beliefs and opinions, and pass the doctor, and so on. I further said that many would-be missionaries are rejected for unsuitability on one ground or another, and this was an eye-opener to him. Perhaps, after that, he treated missionaries with greater respect—certainly there had been little of that commodity in his behaviour before this conversation.

A very respectable Indian Christian was talking to me one day:

"Sir, you ought to have another European nurse in the hospital."

"Yes," I replied, "I know we ought—but we can't pay her salary, and the Society certainly cannot do so, so we can't have one."

"Ah; but your father could pay her salary."

"My father isn't a rich man," I answered.

"But your father is the Treasurer of the London Missionary Society; he must have a *lot* of money."

"I know he's treasurer of the L.M.S.," I replied, "but that only means he advises them about investments, and looks after their finances."

"Ah; but he wouldn't allow all that money to pass through his fingers without some of it sticking to them—he must be a very rich man."

I had not been in India long, and I was rather annoyed at this suggestion.

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"Do you think my father's scoundrel enough to take the Mission's money?" I said.

"Your father's not a fool," was the rejoinder.

I saw at once that it was no use talking any longer. If I had persuaded him of my father's honesty, he would only have thought him a fool, and respected him less for not making better use of his opportunities for embezzlement. This is a striking instance of the difference in mind between East and West.

There is a similar story about an Indian catechist who was sacked by a Mission for financial delinquencies. He went to live in a small village some distance away. Years later, a missionary went along to that village, and was preaching one day about Christ, telling the folk some of the stories of Jesus and His kindness to people, and so on. One of the villagers stopped him. "It's all right," he said, "you needn't trouble to go on with that story. We know that Jesus. He lives in this village." Inquiries were made, and the man they thought was Jesus was produced. Imagine the missionary's astonishment when he found himself face to face with the catechist whom he had dismissed years before for cheating. In spite of his loose conduct of money matters, the catechist had been living such an unselfish, godly, and devoted life in that village that he had interpreted Christ to the villagers in a very real way, and had probably done more practical good than the missionary who had sacked him.

We seem to have digressed from the hospital, so we had better go back there again.

An elderly widow once came in for treatment, with an incurable disease which caused her so much pain that she had been unable to sleep for three weeks. Poor woman—she looked ghastly. I have seldom seen such a miserable, tired expression of continued anguish in anybody's face. She was very well-off, and promised us a tremendous fee if we could relieve her pain. We did an operation under a spinal anæsthetic, which relieved her so much that she slept

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continuously for over two days after it was finished. I believe she would have fulfilled her promise, and materially assisted the funds of the hospital, if it had not been for the unfortunate circumstance that her two sons, heirs of her property, were with her. They saw to it that their share of their mother's legacies was not diminished, and so we never got our money—beyond the very moderate fee we charged for the original operation. But we had saved a poor creature from untold misery and pain, and to do that was worth more than all the money in her estate.

Many of our patients lose much of the benefit they might otherwise receive from treatment by neglecting to follow our advice, or by running away from hospital before the treatment is finished. But a good many others help themselves on to a complete cure by patience and optimism, as in the following case.

Several years ago, a young man came to Neyyoor with both hip-joints absolutely fixed and immovable, so that he couldn't sit down at all. All his life was spent standing up or lying down with legs straight out. He couldn't walk, for one leg could not be put in front of the other. He could only shuffle along, a few inches at each step. The only thing for him was a fairly formidable operation known as Arthroplasty, which consists of the re-making of a new hip-joint, lining the joint with a membrane taken from the muscles of his own thigh. After this operation was done, we fixed him up on a specially adapted bed, so arranged that by pulling at certain strings, which passed over pulleys, he could move his hip- and knee-joints at will. He was very patient and persevering, and after two months he was able to walk a bit. In three months he went home, walking quite fast, and feeling very pleased with life, though he was, of course, only able to move one leg.

Over a year later, he came to us again and had the other hip-joint operated upon in the same way. This time, very bad luck attended him, as he got an attack of acute rheumatism, and the hip-joint which was first operated upon unfor-

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tunately became rather stiff again, though the second one did very well. However, there was nothing to do but to be patient, and once again he triumphed. He went home, still somewhat rheumatic. A few weeks later, I happened to be in the neighbourhood of his house, some 120 miles away from Neyyoor. I went there and called on him one day. It was a small house largely built of mud, and badly needing a coat or two of whitewash. In a small room, lying upon a rough bed, was my friend ; and, looking up at the rafters above him, I saw an arrangement of ropes and pulleys exactly like the ones we had given him in hospital. With great patience, he was getting his hip- and knee-joints going again, and was already very nearly fit to walk about, with both legs movable and usable. I haven't seen him lately, but if his rheumatism has managed to keep away, I have little doubt that he is fairly able-bodied ; and all because he was intelligent and resourceful, although only a poor boy in a little country town. Would that all our patients showed such sensible and persevering co-operation with the doctor ! It is, alas, only too often that they run off home long before their treatment is completed. It is simply for this reason that the radium wards, with their high, prison-like walls and locked gates, are necessary.

If he thinks that things are not getting on quickly enough, the casual-minded Indian villager will sometimes disappear from hospital in the middle of the night, to try some quack remedy he has heard of, or to propitiate his village gods. As often as not, he will make his disease far worse in the process, for the villages are full of men and women ready to offer amateur advice based on superstition and gossip, or willing (for a consideration) to consult horoscopes or to apply plasters of sinister and disgusting composition.

The village midwives often carry on maternity cases with the most septic and brutal methods, many of them the result of ignorance, others arising from superstition. In all countries, a great many old wives' fables and superstitions

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surround the process of childbirth, and in the homes of many Indians these are causes of much suffering and terrible mortality both to women and babies. One of the greatest and most useful bits of work one can do in a medical mission is the sending out to the villages of midwives, properly qualified, educated, and with a Christian background to their lives. We do this on an ever-increasing scale in Travancore, and there are also good midwives working under Government supervision. But the need is so great, and the power of superstition and custom is so intense, that the vast majority of Indian women have still to undergo much unnecessary suffering.

In many villages, if a woman does not have a high fever after labour, it is thought that something must be wrong! I have several times been consulted about this. In some parts, also, it is considered necessary to administer a dreadful dose of purgative to a child when two days old. The poor little thing is very likely to die, but if it survives the dose it is considered strong enough to deserve to live, and continues its course undisturbed by barbarities, for a time, at any rate. But the ignorance and filth of some of the "dais," or village midwives, very often cause great damage to the mother, so much so that the only chance she has subsequently of getting a live baby is that she should have it delivered by operation—the so-called "Cæsarean Section."

On many occasions we have had to perform this operation in Neyyoor. I remember one particular case in which I did this for a woman in the next village. She had given birth to six children, all of them either born dead or dying soon after birth. But on this occasion the child seemed to be all right; we did the Cæsarean operation—the most dramatic of all surgical procedures—and produced the child alive and well. In her great happiness, the mother called her "Arputhajeavam," which means "miraculous life." Every year she brings the child along to Neyyoor for us to have a look at her—she is now eleven years old, and is a

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fine strong girl, the pride and joy of her mother. Many times have we in this way enabled a mother, who, without our aid, would never have had a living child, to get one or more children alive, and to have a happy family of her own. But we are also very often called upon to turn a hopelessly crippled child—if we can do so—into one who is fit and able-bodied.

Little Kamalam was a case like that. She had got very badly burnt when she was a tiny child, and the effects of the burns had completely crippled her; the scars on the two legs, treated by native medicines in the little village where was her home, had healed together in a solid mass, so that her legs, from the top of the thigh to below the knees, were firmly united, and she could not walk at all. Her father brought her along, and I did several operations, at the end of which her legs were completely separated and she could walk. But while he was attending her in hospital we noticed that her father was a leper. He had to be admitted into our Leper Home, and that meant that the little girl (whose mother had died when Kamalam was a baby) could not possibly be sent back to a home where she could not be properly looked after.

In a case like that we have got to do the only Christian thing—to look after her in our orphanage, which exists for exactly that kind of case, and which was then in the charge of my wife. So now the little girl was saved not only from being a helpless cripple, but also from the starvation and neglect which would otherwise have been her lot. One day her father (whose leprosy was of the mild and hardly infective type, and who therefore had been able to get leave to visit his family) came to the orphanage and asked if he might take his little daughter with him to see her aunt and her little sister. My wife was away at the time, and she was not given leave. But the father went home and stayed there instead of coming back to the Leper Home. On her return from the hills, my wife one day took Kamalam along in the car, so as to let her

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see her family and, if possible, to persuade the father to come back to the Leper Home and complete his cure.

My wife found the family living in a terrible state of poverty, in a tiny little hut, with nothing to eat that day except a single jack-fruit, and after that nothing at all for the next day. The worst happened. Not only did the father refuse to come back, but he insisted on keeping the little girl, saying at the same time that he would bring her along in a cart to the market on the following Monday, so that she could go on to school. An hour's persuasion failed to achieve its object, and my wife returned empty-handed and very upset indeed at having lost the little girl and left her to an unknown and dreaded future of unrelieved hunger and squalor.

Nothing could be done; the womenfolk of the village had been told by some mischievous person that Kamalam would be kidnapped and taken to England if she were allowed to return, and they refused to believe that we had any good motive in wishing to keep her at the orphanage. But we were certain that God's will for that child was a happy and healthy life, and we therefore felt it was a case for prayer. With God, all things are possible. So, for a few weeks we prayed definitely that this little girl would be given back to the orphanage, which seemed to be her only chance of life and health and happiness.

We had not long to wait. A few weeks later one evening her father turned up with her. Poor little thing, she was terribly thin and starved, her scars broken down and ulcerated by the filth of the little hovel and the neglect which is bred by ignorance and superstition. She had a high fever due to blood-poisoning, and seemed almost as if she were soon to die. She was like a little frightened rat, in terror even of us who had made her happy before. What tales she had been told by her womenfolk we never found out—nor what can have been their motive for keeping her. The whole thing seemed to have been the work of a personal devil. But God had brought her back, and

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the devil was powerless to hold her. This time the father, realizing her pitiable condition, told us we were to keep her for good. After a few weeks of hospital treatment, her sores had healed, and she has been in the orphanage ever since, a happy, active little girl.

Raju and Sam were two little orphan boys. Their father had died when they were very, very young, and their mother had just managed to keep them alive by the hard and underpaid work which is all a poor Indian woman can hope to get. Often she had no work at all and for a few weeks they would have almost nothing to eat. But at Christmas they might get a real square meal. One Christmas they had bought eight annas' worth of gunpowder and had rolled it with paper and stones into thousands of little balls, which bang on the ground and explode if you throw them hard enough, and which are in constant demand in India at festive seasons. They had made two thousand of these "puddocks" that Christmas time and sold them for a rupee, getting eight annas profit—two good meals each for the whole family! And this year they would do the same. So their mother bought them eight annas' worth of powder and they soon began to make "puddocks." They had just begun to work, with their powder in a coco-nut shell; their mother was boiling a *very* little rice for their next meal over a fire near by; when a spark came along and BANG! Raju was holding the shell of powder in his hand, and he felt a terrible pain as he rolled over with his brother on the sandy floor. He looked down at his hands—but he couldn't see very well—one eye was out and the other was covered with blood. He put up his hand to wipe the blood away so that he could see—but nothing happened. *His hand wasn't there.* He tried the other; but that was torn to shreds. Sam tried to get up to cheer him a little—but he couldn't move; one of Raju's fingers had been blown off with such force that it had actually broken his brother's leg! Another finger was blown right through Raju's own cheek and was



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found later, partly in his mouth, partly in the wound in his face.

A kindly neighbour bound up the poor little bleeding lads with a few bits of dirty rags and suggested they should go to the nearest hospital. "No," said the mother, "I can't afford that; I've no money, and they wouldn't do anything for the boys unless I paid them." What was there to do, then?

Well, they were lucky. They were not very many miles from Neyyoor; and their mother managed to beg the loan of a bullock-cart and took them along to Neyyoor Hospital. Within a few minutes of arrival they were fast asleep, having their wounds dressed and their poor shattered limbs trimmed up under the merciful oblivion of chloroform. It took over an hour on one of the busy days just before Christmas to fix them up; one hand had to be re-amputated, the other trimmed up; the lacerated eye was neatly removed, the wounds cleaned and dressed.

Sam, the younger boy, had his brother's finger removed from his shattered leg, and the bones wired together. That night they both got a good sleep with an injection of morphia. The gentle-handed orderly dressed their wounds every day, until they at last healed up. Raju has a glass eye now that he's very proud of; and his brother, perfectly healed, is running about as before. Poor Raju has no left hand and a pretty poor clawey thing for a right hand, but he's full of smiles and joy.

The two boys are now healthy and happy, and have been spared a tremendous lot of pain by being treated in a hospital. But if Neyyoor hadn't been there, what would have happened? They would probably have been taken to a village medicine-man who would have rubbed some irritant muck into the wounds, and caused them frightful pain—and it's more than likely that both of them would have died of blood-poisoning.

We gave Raju a job in the office for a little while, and he was so bright that we realized that he was an exception-

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ally clever lad. He is now at a Mission school, doing really well.

Thousands of other stories could be told of patients for whom Neyyoor was the one chance they had of life, or of health. But there is no room for more than these few, selected somewhat at random from the many patients of whose after-history we know something. Multiply each of these cases by several thousands, and you get somewhere near the work of a Mission Hospital in India.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### OUR HOSPITAL STAFF

WE HAVE ALREADY DESCRIBED A DAY'S WORK AT NEYYOOR from the point of view of the medical missionary. He is, after all, only one of the staff, and though he has a good deal of work to do himself, that work would be impossible without his fellow-workers, Indian and European. However well an operation may be performed, however correct the treatment prescribed for a medical case, the nursing and care of the patients in the wards are of vital importance to their well-being. Here we are fortunate in having a first-class lot of helpers.

In Neyyoor, we have always worked on the principle that male patients must be nursed by male nurses, and women must be looked after by women. Our three nursing superintendents—two from England, one from Australia—are responsible for the training of our nursing staff, and for all their work. Many hours a week they spend in giving lectures, and many hours more in continual supervision of the wards. Their reward is the delightful one of seeing simple Indian boys and girls developing under their care into first-rate nurses. The needs of our patients are simple, for many of them have never slept upon a bed nor used a blanket in their lives. The mild, warm air of South India takes away the need for mattresses, doors, windows, fireplaces, and many other amenities which we look for in hospitals at home. In spite of this simplification of a nurse's task, there are a thousand and one things which nurses in India have got to do in order to give their patients the best chance of fighting their way back to health, and of going home as soon as possible, able-bodied and fit for work.

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Our nurses do nearly all the dressing of wounds. Most of the male ones can do test meals for gastric cases, can apply splints and antiphlogistine, can take charge of a great deal of after-treatment, and all can prepare patients for operations. The standard of nursing of our surgical cases is higher than I have seen in several large European hospitals. The fact, already mentioned, that our mortality compares favourably with some of the London hospitals is a great tribute to the skill and care of many of our nurses and orderlies. But more important even than these things is the spirit in which they are shown. The relation of nurse to patient is ideally the relation of Jesus to the sick folk who sought His aid. The first essential is a real love, expressing itself in unstinted devotion, real compassion, and a deep desire to make the patient comfortable and happy. Now, I don't suppose that many of us attain to that ideal, but quite a number of our nursing staff of both sexes do their work in a spirit that goes a long way towards it. It is only too often that one sees the orderlies in Indian hospitals continually on the make, charging patients for fetching a drink of water or for doing the little services for them which every nurse should do as part of his or her duty. I am thankful to say that we hardly ever see that at Neyyoor. I venture to think that if any orderly did that sort of thing, he would become suspect and unpopular with the rest.

Certainly, I have seen in some of our orderlies a quality of character that has made me thoroughly ashamed of myself and my own poor efforts at attaining a high standard. Several times I have come across definite cases of patients whose whole life and outlook have been changed by the service that members of our nursing staff have rendered to them. I remember a patient a few years ago who was treated for a very serious illness in one of the private wards. He was an influential Hindu of good family, and was very ill indeed. One of our orderlies—we will call him Anthony—was very attentive to him and helped to

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pull him through, often staying in the room with him and caring for him even during his off-duty times. Eventually the patient passed the crisis of his illness, but one night shortly afterwards felt very worried about himself, thinking he was worse. There was another orderly on night duty at that time, but the patient didn't want *him*; nothing but the attentions of the faithful Anthony would satisfy him. So he sent Krishnan, one of his relations, who was looking after him in his little ward, to find Anthony and fetch him along. Up and down the hospital he went; into the hostel where the orderlies sleep; along all the verandas, too—but no sign of Anthony. Finally, he went into the front hall of the hospital, where patients wait for the doctor, and where the meetings are held. There in a corner, on his knees at one of the benches, he found Anthony at last. For a moment he listened, and soon heard that Anthony was praying to God,<sup>1</sup> asking Him to give skill to the doctors, and strength and gentleness to himself, above all asking that the patient—this very patient who was now sending for him in the middle of the night—might recover from his illness and soon be fit and strong again. The rather awestruck Krishnan waited until the prayer was finished, and then went up and tapped Anthony on the shoulder. He got up, went straight along to the patient, and sat for some time with him, attending to his needs.

In course of time, the invalid recovered, and the day came for him to leave the hospital. He had been very much impressed by the faithful work of our friend, Anthony, and still more moved by the fact that this lad who had done so much for him had actually prayed to God, probably on many occasions, for his recovery. His own religion had never taught him to take much interest in the welfare of other people—certainly not if they were in a different caste. Here was something finer and better than the Hinduism of his village temple or his family traditions. Here

<sup>1</sup> It is the Indian custom both to pray and to read aloud.

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was a young man working well and conscientiously at the job of bringing health to others, and doing it for less salary than he would get for the same job at a Government hospital. Yes; and never asking for tips—always cheerful and kind and patient, quite different from the nursing orderlies he had seen at other hospitals. This incident, together with the kindness and attention he got at Neyyoor, led that patient, when he arrived home, to announce to his people that he was going to serve the Christians' God in future—yes, even if it meant the loss of family and possessions and of position. We have since heard that he is living a new and better life, and has had great influence for good in his village—all because of the loving and constant care of a Neyyoor orderly. Having been in a private ward, this patient had probably never been at a service, nor had a word preached at him. But he had seen the Christianity that matters—the life of service and love that speaks so much louder than any sermon.

That is not an isolated instance, by any means. I remember another patient, also of good family and caste, who had been educated in England. Seeing that much in the legends of Hinduism was trivial and magical, he had rejected all religion, and believed that no God existed at all. After a good long time in hospital, during which we had saved his life, he asked me to come and see him in his ward. I did so, and he told me all about himself. "Now I have been here," he ended, "and seen all this work going on for the sake of other people, I can see God in it all. The accident that happened to me was all in the plan of God, whom I had rejected, and who was drawing me back to Himself."

A doctor from a distant part of the country visited the hospital once, and told me afterwards: "I have been in several parts of India, and have worked for years in Government hospitals in British India. But I never saw what Christianity meant until I came to Neyyoor, and see all the work your staff do for low salaries, yet with

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efficiency and love." Another patient said to me: "The difference between your Christian hospital and the non-Christian one at — is that your staff work well, but never ask for money, whilst theirs are always asking for money, but don't do anything for the patients."

Of course, we have our snags, and occasionally a member of our staff is found to be letting down the standard or to be asking the patients for money. But that sort of thing, I am thankful to say, is very rare, and there are, I believe, hundreds—perhaps thousands—of our patients who have taken home with them the feeling that they have seen something of the Love of God in action at Neyyoor.

In contrast to former conditions, when, as I have previously said, the nursing profession was despised in India, the announcement of a single vacancy on our nursing staff now brings scores of applications, many of them from most respectable and well-educated young men and women. We have had to institute competitive examinations to find the best candidate—often out of a really good lot—for our nursing posts. The vast majority come to us not merely for the training and for the certificates which we issue, but with the idea and intention of becoming whole-time workers in the Medical Mission in order to bring health and happiness to their less fortunate fellows. We pay our staff adequately, but in every case the pay is intentionally somewhat below that in the Government hospitals, for we do not wish to make the Mission service financially attractive.

It is very difficult to judge the sincerity and the motive of applicants for jobs. In our examinations for the nursing posts, we generally set questions such as: "If you had a thousand rupees, what would you do with them?" and "If someone owed you a thousand rupees and couldn't pay, what would you do to him?" or "What scheme would you work out, if you were a dictator, to relieve unemployment in Travancore?" An answer to the first question such as, "I should give all the money to the

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Medical Mission," is usually so suspect as to plough the candidate at sight. So is a too obviously pious answer to the second, such as the suggestion of immediate and unconditional forgiveness of the debt. But the very fact that a boy or girl from a fairly comfortable home and with a decent education is willing to serve the Mission for this low salary is a test of the philanthropic motive far more valuable than any examination. If we raised salaries to the same standard as Government rates, we should be far more likely to get time-servers, and people who were merely out to get a job, applying for our posts. As it is, I continually feel that one of the chief joys of service in India is the loyalty and consistent cheerfulness of our staff. Most of them are simple country-folk, many of them in their social origins are from a community which is considered as "untouchable" by the strict rules of caste. Yet we find that caste Hindus and socially elevated persons, when they come as patients to our hospitals, are only too delighted to be nursed by these excellent fellows, and show them that respect which faithful and cheerful service usually commands.

In Neyyoor, we see the man-made rules of caste and separation between social orders broken down by the only power that can break them—the brotherhood of man. I have heard Britishers who have been in India sneering at the Christians. "Give me a Hindu or a Mohammedan servant if you like, but for God's sake don't give me one of those terrible Indian Christians. All scoundrels." There is an element of truth in this. Very many of the Indian Christians are from the outcaste or untouchable community. Kept in a degraded position for centuries by the rules of caste, denied the rights of man by the religious and social system of the country, the outcaste has no hope of rising to something better. There is only one way out—to change his religion. A very large number of Indians from the depressed and backward communities have made this their way of escape. Hence it comes about



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that the majority of Indian Christians are in their origins from a so-called "low" social order. Most of those whom I know personally are the great-grandsons and grandsons of men who came over—sometimes a whole village at a time—into a very nominal variety of Christianity, largely in order to escape from the rules of caste and the tyranny of the Hindu social order. Now, if nothing is done for people like that—if their newly adopted religion is allowed to remain a purely nominal thing—their character is unchanged. If they were scoundrels before, scoundrels they will remain, of little use to God or man. But Christianity was never meant to be a nominal thing, or a mere change of social life.

The central core of Christ's teaching was the essential equality of all men, but His real object was to transform character by bringing out the best in everyone through the exercise of love and loyalty. Realizing this, the missionaries and their Indian helpers during the last century have made every effort to take these nominal adherents of a new faith, and to bring them to something higher and better. First, a little education is necessary—there are many hundreds of elementary schools run by Christian missions in our part of India. When he can read and write, he can better appreciate life, and can then be taught the elements of Christian ethics. Love, self-control, sincerity, unselfishness; the evils of quarrelling, malice, and resentment—these and many other things must he learn. He has lived all his life in a backward village community where the background of life was fear of the local devils (and perhaps, too, of the village policeman). The animistic religion of his little village temple had nothing whatever to do with character and morals, but was simply magic and superstition. The only thing he knew of the great official religion of India was that it kept him bound down to a degraded life and denied him all opportunity of rising to anything better. Religion, in fact, was completely divorced from character. It had nothing to do with life.

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He has therefore got a long way to go, having entered into a religion, however nominally, in which the essential is a new life and a fine character. It is a slow and laborious process ; but the old missionaries were faithful and patient. No doubt many of the converts reverted to type. Many absorbed but imperfectly the new teaching, and to many Christianity remained only an escape from the stigma of untouchability or a fire insurance against the terrors of hell. But a large number really got hold of the essentials of Christ's teaching, and tried to lead a new kind of life. Though, in most cases, years were required, and, in some cases, two or three generations, yet in the end splendid results have been produced. As for those who grumble about the poor quality of Indian Christians, I wish I could bring them to Neyyoor and introduce them to some of our doctors, nurses, and orderlies. The majority of these come from families who went over, a village at a time, in a mass movement, to an extremely nominal form of Christianity some generations ago. Now we have got their great-grandchildren with us at Neyyoor, spending their lives in the relief of pain and in helping their less fortunate fellow-men, many of them attaining a high standard of life and character.

Such men and women are a living and striking witness to the power of Christ, when faithfully presented and properly understood, to transform character and life.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### HINDUISM, OLD AND NEW

RELIGION IS SO OUTSTANDING A CHARACTERISTIC OF THE Indian, and provides so much of his mental background, that it is time to give a brief review of the religious situation in India. In our hospital work we find that we have very little to do with the religion of India as such. I have already hinted that our chief work is that of practical Christianity, rather than theoretical, and that the principal thing we are up against is the result of ignorance and superstition rather than of official religion. We medical missionaries are, in fact, faced with the effects of the animism of the small villages; but except in so far as it involves the system of caste and the social life of the people, Hinduism affects our work not at all.

Man has been defined as "a religious animal," and the Indian, far more than the European, deserves this designation. Any book which deals principally with India is bound to take notice of the religion of the people. Much has been written about it, but the knowledge of the average Britisher of India's religious life is very small indeed.

One of the most surprising things about the Indian villager is his ignorance about his own religion. Hindu boys have nearly all got Hindu names, yet when one asks them after whom they have been called, or what are the stories about him, one finds that very few of the legends of Hindu mythology are universally known.

The first few pages of the *Ramayana*, the story of Krishna stealing butter when he was a lad, and a few others read in school books, comprise all the knowledge of Hindu tradition that most villagers have. The chief reason for

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this is the fact that Hinduism in India is, broadly speaking, of two kinds, and the realization of this is very important. First of all, there is the Vedic Hinduism—the old traditional religion of India, dating many centuries before Christ, and founded on their ancient scriptures, of which the most important are the early *Vedas*,<sup>1</sup> the *Brahmanas* and *Upanishads* being of later date. Secondly, and very different, is the popular Hinduism of the temples in the towns and villages. Then there is the animism of the small, almost uncivilized villages, and of some of the wild tribes; but that is not Hinduism at all, properly speaking, although the tolerant and absorptive character of Hinduism is sometimes reckoned to include them. In many respects the orthodox Hindu religion is a fine and noble thing. Spirit is the reality, matter the illusion. Different schools of thought have their different interpretations of God, Mind, the Soul, and Eternal Life. Vedantism considers God as an impersonal Absolute, whereas the leaders of the Bhakti movement consider Him as personal and responding to devotion. Some of the Vedas stress the unity of God, whereas the Samkhya philosophy has been described as an “atheistic dualism,” and popular Hinduism is more and more polytheistic the farther it gets from the original scriptures.

The universality and eternity of the Soul<sup>2</sup> is fundamental to nearly all Hindu thought. The one ultimate reality is Brahma, and, as *The Bhagavad Gita* (A.D. 100–200) picturesquely expresses it—“the whole universe is strung upon me (Brahma) as pearls upon a thread. . . . I am the light in moon and sun. . . . I am the life in all creatures.” This idea is the very foundation of the thought of India, and underlies the belief in the sacredness of stones, or trees, or rivers. It inspires the repugnance felt by every Hindu, and by many other Indians, too, to the taking of animal

<sup>1</sup> Approximate dates—*Rig Veda*, 1000 B.C.; *Upanishads*, 500 B.C.

<sup>2</sup> *Atma*. The well-known word *Mahatma* simply means Great Soul. Dates: *Vedanta*, A.D. 900; *Bhakti-margha*, A.D. 1400.

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life.<sup>1</sup> By most Hindu thinkers, the soul of man is supposed to be Brahma, the fundamental World-Soul, dwelling in the body. Our independence is momentary, and if we can but attain a true union with Brahma this alone will give us Eternal Life (Moksha, or release from the necessity of passing through countless reincarnations). Thus, the Hindu sages have sought both to define this release and to obtain it through knowledge of God. To some, the ultimate goal of man is to be reabsorbed into the Universal Spirit of which he is really a temporarily detached part. To others, a personal God is separated from man by barriers of sin, and the ideal is to aim at union with God but not absorption into Him—a type of thought which very closely approaches Christian philosophy.

In either case the aim is the same—union with God. The “Bhakti-margha,” or school of devotion,<sup>2</sup> holds that “love of God makes a man perfect, immortal and happy.” His idea of salvation is a relationship between God, who loves mankind and longs for man’s response, and man, who, by the exercise of his love for God, can unite with Him. This form of thought is held chiefly by the Vaishnavites, worshippers of God as revealed in the incarnations of Vishnu, especially his incarnation as Krishna. In South India, some of the Saivites (worshippers of God as Siva) also follow this teaching, but not in the north. All the sects who follow Bhakti (devotion) are agreed that only the grace of God, in answer to the loving faith of the soul, can give salvation to man.

To the worst hell will I go,

So but Thy grace be with me.<sup>3</sup>

Siva, me didst Thou save;

Sweet to me have been Thy ways.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For this I am indebted to J. C. Winslow, *The Indian Mystic*, pp. 13, 15.

<sup>2</sup> A sect which flourished in the sixth or seventh century, though most of its literature dates from the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries.

<sup>3</sup> *Manika Vasahar*. (Trans. Kingsbury & Phillips.) Saivite. Date, A.D. 700.

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He is ever hard to find, but He lives in the thought of the good.<sup>1</sup>

None who is devoted to Me is lost.<sup>2</sup>

Mother and child are two ;

If not, where were love ?

Pray, then, no more for utter oneness with God.<sup>3</sup>

Pray not for utter merging,

Pray not for paradise ;

Know God, take God, Love God

Now.<sup>3</sup>

I lay before Him as an offering my body, my mind, and all that I have.<sup>4</sup>

This is a very brief selection of quotations from the poems of the Bhakti school of thought, but it is enough to show the close affinity between these men and the Christian mystics. The Indian, with his innate love of classification, has laid down five ways by which God may be approached. Briefly, they are fellowship with good men and true devotees ; emotional songs and worship by music and dancing ; reading of the scriptures ; pilgrimage to a shrine ; and worship of images where God is especially " concentrated." <sup>5</sup>

Although this list is not imposing, and signifies methods of which several are very inferior to the ways by which Christ indicated that men could approach God, yet the further classification, of the degrees of devotion to God, is striking. These are, first, peace or rest ; second, service ; third, friendship ; fourth, love as between child and parent ; and, lastly, love as between husband and wife—the highest love and deepest union that man, from his own

<sup>1</sup> *Tirunavukkarasu Swami*. Saivite, eighth or ninth century A.D.

<sup>2</sup> *The Bhagavad Gita*, ix, 31, second century A.D.

<sup>3</sup> *Tukaram*, 997, 3406. Notice his definite antipathy to the Samkhya philosophy. Date, A.D. 1608-49.

<sup>4</sup> *Kabir*, trans. R. Tagore. Date, A.D. 1440-1518. Kabir was an eclectic, trying to combine Islam and the broad Hindu Bhakti of Ramanand.

<sup>5</sup> Compare the feelings of the Catholic towards the Reserved Sacrament.

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experience, is capable of conceiving. With all this before us as the higher and more authoritative side of the Hindu religion, we see clearly the wonderful points of contact between this type of Hinduism and Christianity. But we see also the very remarkable fact that the deficiencies of Hinduism are just in those very points in which Christianity can supply the need and fulfil, to an extent but dreamed of by the highest of the old sages, their desire for God Himself. In place of God as revealed by the imperfect incarnations of Krishna, Rama, and the Hindu demi-gods, with their quarrels, peccadilloes, and human standards of conduct, we have the supreme revelation of God which Christ gives us. Jesus replaces image-worship and pilgrimage by His insistence on the universality of God, offering us Himself as the supreme Life in which God was manifest—how far different from the worship of a mere image or the attending of a festival! Christian revivalists have sought to arouse a thirst for God by reacting on the emotions, both in Britain and India, and especially in America, by popular songs, sentimental mass-prayer, and penitent benches. But the emptiness of mere emotion has long ago been exposed, though probably it has its uses as well as its misuses.

To sum up, we cannot help seeing that as Jesus came “not to destroy, but to fulfil,” so He can take the best of Hinduism and use it as a basis on which to build the Kingdom of God. It is no part of our work as Christians to destroy Hinduism, nor to go out to India with any feeling of superiority of race or religion, but to serve India in the spirit of Christ Himself, servant of mankind. Then one day the thought of Tilak will be fulfilled:

Yea, at the end of pregnant strife,  
Enthroned as teacher of the earth  
This land of Hind shall teach the worth  
Of Christian faith and Christian life.

India is necessary to Christ, just as Christ is to India.

The second variety of Hinduism, the popular religion of

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village temple and street, has very little in common with the type of Hinduism just dealt with." In fact, "village Hinduism" has no more to do with the highest side of the Hindu religion than has the Christianity of some churches and chapels with the religion of Jesus. The incarnations of Vishnu, which have already been mentioned, together with the numerous and complex legends about them, have been stressed to such an extent (just as were the saints in the mediæval Christian Church) that they have become separate gods. Each god or goddess has his or her special attributes, each story about them its special significance. The result has been the building up of a pantheon of subsidiary gods so large that a very spacious heaven must be required to hold them. Different parts of the country, and sometimes even different villages, worship different gods.

Popular gods, like Ganapati, the elephant-headed son of Siva, bringer of good luck, are universally worshipped. In South India, Subramonian is especially adored as the god of learning. Lower in the social scale, the village "Ammal," or mother, is a purely animistic creation of the villagers, usually a terrible being, requiring sacrifices if they are permitted by law; and very often her temple is the seat of debased orgies. Near our hospital at Neyyoor is an ant-heap, worshipped as a goddess for miles around, and said to have great power as a healer of cripples. Each year a festival takes place, and for days the roads are thick with people walking to the festival—often going a hundred miles or more on foot, regularly once a year, to worship the ant-heap at the auspicious time. A brisk trade is done in rough models of arms or legs to be presented to the spirit of the ant-heap by being thrown on to the roof of the temple. If you have no baby, you can buy a model cradle for a penny and throw it up; provided it reaches the roof, the ant-heap spirit will give you your baby before another year is out. A touching sight at this festival is the offering of the rice before it is eaten. The family—father, mother, and all the children—spread out their rice on the ground



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before the temple. A priest comes along, is devoutly salaamed, and goes from family to family, giving them permission to eat their rice, a portion having been taken away from each family for the use of the god. Then at last the hungry little children can get their dinner. This festival, with its crowds of tens of thousands in a little sea-side village that normally contains only a few hundred people, is a truly remarkable sight. Impromptu merry-go-rounds, both horizontal and vertical (like miniature "great wheels"), sideshows and stalls, reminding one of the country fairs at home, an open-air cinema show, together with the processions of magnificently caparisoned elephants in connection with the temple, combine to make a picturesque scene. But the mob is so dense and seething that progress from place to place is very slow. It ends after ten days with a firework display, and many of the patients, who came to be cured by the ant-heap spirit, turn up at our hospital, and there get treatment which is more likely to cure them. When finally the cure is effected, it is to the ant-heap that they offer their thanks, and it is the ant-heap which really gets the credit in the minds of many.

One day, I was watching the big procession with its myriad torchlights, its great elephants, its buffoon dressed up and making coarse jokes, its man "possessed with a devil" who raved up and down, and the car bearing the insignia of the ant-heap spirit. An educated Hindu of my acquaintance saw me and came to my side. "Sir," he said, "do you realize that these people are all worshipping the same God as you? The real meaning of all this is a worship of God, the great creator spirit." I wonder. Was he right? Perhaps, after all, that is what they were trying to do; the festival, with its tawdriness, its effectiveness, its pathos, was an expression of a faith in unseen powers and a desire to get in some measure nearer God. Is that so? If it is, what a tremendous call to bring to them the revelation of God that satisfies.

This festival, and the devil-dance described elsewhere,

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are not Hinduism except in so far as they happen to be in India. But Hinduism is the most tolerant and absorptive of all the great religions, and the more unsophisticated forms of Hinduism vary greatly from place to place.

The imagination of generations of mankind has invented all sorts of ceremonies and festivals, formalities and forms of worship, and these contain an amazing assortment of the good and evil, sincere and sinister, uplifting and degrading. At the "Holi" festival, for instance, you go about splashing dye over your friends, and it is considered auspicious to shout out obscene remarks. Go to another festival and you will find intense devotion and an abhorrence of anything that is not in the best of taste. In Travancore, at many of the temple festivals, the fascinating, and really artistic, "Kathakali"<sup>1</sup> is the chief show. Actors are trained from their infancy in this art, which consists in interpreting the Hindu legends by means of signs made by the face and fingers. The expressiveness by which they fit their gestures to the words chanted behind them by a soloist is equalled only by the effectiveness of the scene. A few lamp-stands, with blazing wicks and voluminous smoke, provide the footlights. The costumes are gorgeous and quaint, in design not unlike the royalties of playing-cards, but with immense golden hats such as one sees in the images of the Hindu gods. The stories depicted by Kathakali are the legends of Hindu mythology in which these gods and demi-gods are the protagonists. Like the Tibetan devil-dances, Kathakali is informative, and was intended to show to masses of illiterate people the religious stories they could not read for themselves. In these days, a great many more people are literate, especially in the go-ahead State of Travancore, but Kathakali remains, and long may it flourish, for it is a truly artistic form of entertainment, found nowhere in the world save on the Malabar coast of India. But popular Hinduism is not always so artistically or so innocuously interpreted. As would be

<sup>1</sup> Pronounced Küddhaküilly.

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expected of any religion in which character plays so small a part, and ceremonial, magic, and superstition such a large one, there are many ways in which the evil side of man's nature has run riot in inventing ceremonies and accessories for the man-made religion of the village temple. We are here very far removed from the lofty thought of Bhakti or the teachings of the *The Bhagavad Gita*.

In looking at the evil side of popular Hinduism, one is struck by the undoubted fact, too little realized, that where man evolves a religion, he tends to do so in certain ways which are common to many countries and faiths. The most important and most fundamental of these is the creation of a priesthood—a section of the community who are said to be in special contact with the gods, and therefore in a specialist's position with regard to ordinary men and women. In nearly every religion a priesthood of some sort has been evolved, and the priest is said to possess special powers, conferred on him either by right of birth or by a magical ceremonial. Those powers are often exploited in such a way as to procure material gain for the priest, who has ordinary folk in the position of a kind of spiritual blackmail, and often makes a very good thing out of it. As in many other religions, the priests of the temples of India are of all sorts. Some of them are true devotees, and seriously convinced that they are on the right path. Others are among the most dissolute and sinister rogues whom it has been my lot to meet. Over some temples—among them two in particular, of special reputation for so-called "sanctity"—there hovers a spirit of evil, and on entering their portals one feels a definite sensation of diabolical influences surrounding one. Many people whom I know have felt exactly the same thing in these temples. The devilish doings of the Borgias and the Satanic goings-on in the Church of the twelfth century must have provided a very similar atmosphere of evil. Just as St. Francis and his followers felt this evil and got away from it into simplicity and "poverty," so some of the enlightened Hindus of

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to-day recognize the evils in the temples and deplore them. But the tragedy is that the masses of the people in South India worship in temples which, instead of elevating them, as a religion should do, are mixed up with degrading doings, many of them unprintable even in these days of literary outspokenness.

The best known of these evils is the system of temple prostitution, a system which was known in the Babylonian days, and was mixed up with much of the worship of ancient Rome; certain twelfth-century churches in Italy are known to have run prostitutes as an attraction to their worshippers and a financial speculation for the benefit of the church. In India this sordid business usually starts with the death of a high-caste man. The husband, according to the tenets of Hinduism, is, practically speaking, the god of the wife, and for her to lose him is not only the greatest possible misfortune, but is a supreme disgrace, for it is surely the punishment of some terrible sins she must have committed either in this or in some previous incarnation. What can she do to expiate such fearful evil?

She has one priceless possession left, her little girl. The most precious thing in all the world is the only worthy offering to undo the effect of her appalling sin. So the little girl, perhaps three or four years old, is given to the temple. There she becomes a dancing girl. I have seen the quaint and clever dancing of these little girls in some of the temples. Well trained, and surrounded by the beautiful carvings of centuries ago; lit up by the brilliant rays of the sun, rendered brighter still by the dark purple shadows of the stately temple passages, what could be more charming than to see a group of Indian girls, their brown bodies dressed in coloured silk, dancing a Kolāṭum<sup>1</sup> to the music of drum and clarinet? It is certainly a very attractive scene—but I hate seeing these charming little dancers, for I know what

<sup>1</sup> A round dance rather like many of our old English dances. A Kalial, or stick-dance, is not unlike a Morris dance, but may be much more varied, and requires very great skill in its complexity.

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is in store for them. Before many years have passed, these same little girls will have become temple women each with a small room adjoining the wall of the temple; and thus the religion of the country, the very power which ought to uplift the people, is actually supported by pandering to the lust of the worshippers.

Miss Carmichael and her fellow-workers at Dohnavur have rescued hundreds of high-caste Hindu girls from this life, and the work that is done there, with its building-up of fine Christian character and its insistence on the highest standards of love and friendliness and service, is the best bit of mission work I have ever seen. Doubtless those who work in that Fellowship could tell far more than I of this evil side of India's popular religion; but enough has been said. I have no wish to write a sanitary inspector's report on the lines of some books that have been written recently on the subject of India. If one is on the look-out for evil one can find plenty of it in any country. But I would consider that I had failed to give a true picture of Indian life and of India's needs if I had omitted to mention this typical way in which man, from high beginnings, has evolved a popular religion which appeals to the basest instincts of mankind, and exploits them to its financial advantage.

In many parts of India, happily, this temple prostitution is now illegal. But in India the law is often evaded, and I personally know several temples which carry on this nefarious practice, though in such a way as to evade prosecution. If anyone wishes to wallow in accounts of the degraded side of Indian life, they can read such books as *Mother India*, *The Land of the Lingam*, or *Queer India*. Personally, I deprecate such wallowing—he who does it is in danger of becoming as degenerate as the mire in which he wallows. The present volume is written from the motive of a deep love of the Indian people, with the sole purpose of giving a true and unbiased picture of Indian life. I want to introduce my readers to the good things as well as to the evils of India. But there are some evils which cannot be

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passed over—it would be unfair to India if they were, for India herself will have to rid herself of them, and I believe it is Christ and none other who will help her to do so.

Hanky-panky, superstition, and magic are all mixed up with religion, especially in the villages. In a vast country like India, where the official religion has done little to discourage these things, it is inevitable that charlatanism and superstition should flourish. We have only to read the advertisement pages of any paper in England to see ourselves surrounded by them. But in some communities in India, they are rampant, and more especially in the village life of the country. Times and seasons are held to be of great significance. Every day there is a "ragukalam," usually lasting about one and a half hours, during which time it is inauspicious to do anything. A few of our patients in Neyyoor refuse to have operations done during these periods, and the majority of our Hindu patients consult an astrologer or the family Guru (counsellor) before deciding on which day to have their operation. The influence of the Guru on the family is very great; he is their father-confessor, and they obey his advice on many matters. If he is a good man (and some whom I know are excellent people), he may exert a really good influence on the family. His relation to the family is not unlike that of the priest in some parts of Southern Ireland. The drawback of both is the same. The religion of the Guru has so much to do with formality and observance, so little to do with character or integrity, that his advice is apt to be confined to things such as horoscopes, auspicious times, and other superstitions.

On one occasion, I had to go 40 miles to perform an operation on a leading and devout Hindu. I was not allowed to start from my house until 4.30 p.m., and had to arrive at his by 6.30. The operation could not begin until 7 in the evening—an inconsiderate arrangement on the part of the spirit world, for it is dark before 7 in South India all the year round. However, all went off well, and

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the patient is still alive, one of the most polished and pleasant-mannered people I know, as well as being a man of first-class education. It seems strange to us that one of this type should set such store by times and seasons. Yet I remember that, the other day, when at Victoria Station in Manchester I saw, within a few minutes, three or four of the hard-headed business men of the North spend a shilling each at the bookstall on a horoscope. The desire for magic is one of the most fundamental ; few of us escape it entirely. In the smaller villages of India, the religion of the people is almost entirely based on magic and superstition, and to complete our rough survey of the religion of India we must have a look at this side of her religious life.

Come with me to a devil-dance in a South Indian village. The warm, intensely black Indian night has fallen. The sky is dotted with the myriad brilliant stars, far brighter than we see them in our more cloudy nights at home. It is the great night of the year—the one time at which the not too benignant spirit enters into his idol. The villagers are all assembled to see Neelan, the devil-dancer, and his antics, to get a bit of a “kick” out of the night’s entertainment. They have brought garlands of flowers and piled them on the neck of the stone which does duty for an image in this primitive little hamlet. The local band, with two or three drums and a clarinet, is tuning up, and in comes Neelan, dressed in short, embroidered trousers, and a silk scarf.

A brief obeisance in front of the shrine, and the band starts to play. Wonderful indeed is the syncopated rhythm of the drums ; true to a fraction of a tone is the tuning of each one of them. Our Western orchestras have no instrument more skilfully and accurately played, and none nearly so effective as the mridangam, or Indian drum. The clarinet rhapsodizes on a beautiful old Tamil tune, whilst an old man in the corner drones a ground-bass on a reed-pipe. Gradually, the music gets faster and the dancer begins to sway from side to side. Soon he is shuffling and stepping this way and that, nodding and shaking his

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head, and working himself up into a frenzy. The band accelerates more and more ; the crowd follow it all, the more emotional among them swaying about and trying to share in some measure the orgiastic sensations of the dancer. A few old men sit listless in a corner. They have seen this sort of thing so many times. Small children look on with open eyes, staring at the antics, not quite sure what to make of it all. And all the time the music and the dancing keep on and on, faster and ever faster, working to a climax. By now, our friend Neelan has got really worked up, and the fire of madness is in his eyes. The drummers are sweating all over in their energetic and really rather wonderful attainment of a rhythmic climax. Faster and faster, just like the Red Queen in Alice—faster and faster, all sharing in the sensation that some loss of control, some demon-possession maybe, some queer mania is taking hold of them. Still the old men sit there, bored, but approving ; some of the women have got thoroughly into the swing of it, and are nodding their heads and twisting their necks, faster and ever faster. The noise is tremendous. Who would have thought that three drums could have made such effect ? Faster and louder they play—the climax is terrific. The dancer is now almost in a torment of rapid contortion, with blazing eyes and streaming with sweat. Suddenly, the music stops with a shiver. The drums stop. The time has come. Now, at this moment, the spirit of the god has entered into the stone pillar. All are silent. Many of them fold their hands in an attitude of devotion, just for a few minutes. Some of them repeat the name of Rama or another of the demi-gods of Hindu mythology. The orgy is finished—or, at least, that part of it at which they don't mind an onlooker. Some of the villagers, with one more obeisance, turn round and go out into the night, back to their little mud houses. For them, the annual event is over. They have been in the presence of What ? Of magic, of a spirit, sinister if not propitiated ; of a vision of emotion let loose ; of God or of the Devil ?



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Back they go to their village life, back to untouchability, their place in the social scale. Charming people, by nature intended for the chances which official religion denies them ; but so often warped and degraded by that very denial. Can the orgy just described, albeit fascinating and intense, be of any help to them, or of any value in their lives ? No ; in the Indian village we see religion divorced from life and powerless to help or to comfort or to give lasting happiness ; powerless to raise up or to encourage, heedless of man's need for brotherhood and love.

■

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### THE HOPE OF INDIA

COME WITH ME TO THE SAME VILLAGE THREE YEARS LATER. A preacher has been round, telling them of God the loving Father who wants us all to have a chance. He has told them of the family of God in which there is no caste and no untouchability ; he has shown them something of Jesus, who spent His whole life in doing unselfish things and making others happier. "What's this new religion? No caste? A chance for all? One man just as good as another? It can't be true." Years pass, and still they hear no more. But they are continually talking about this new thing. "It may not have the excitement of the devil-dances, but it sounds more likely to give us a decent life, and a chance for the children to do better than we have done. Let's ask for another preacher to come." So it goes on, and by and by there is a majority in the village in favour of changing to the new religion. One day, the change is decided upon. Without more ado, they begin to call each other Matthew and Daniel and Jacob and other names from the Bible. They now have some hope in life, so they take a bit more interest in keeping their houses clean, and washing their clothes occasionally.

But it may stop there. The missionary has no helpers to send along. The calls of his own work in the district will only allow of an occasional visit to that village. People cannot be received into the Christian Church without preparation and instruction, so they remain just nominal Christians. The years pass, and someone at home hears of the need for a native teacher at ——. A few pounds a year is enough, and her Sunday-school are looking out for a

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definite object in the Mission on which to focus their interest. One Sunday, she puts it to her class—what about supporting the native teacher? All are agreed, and out comes the few pounds a year. The village has got a teacher now, and a tiny school is built of mud bricks and coco-nut thatching. Little by little, the villagers learn what it really means to be a Christian, and though at first they can't understand it very well, yet, during the years, it soaks in. It is largely done by the life of the humble catechist in their little school. He is always kind, always thinking of other people, always patient, always ready to help. He says that God can be talked to at any time, not merely at certain times of festival. He says a lot more, but what really counts is what he does. He shows them, imperfectly, but very truly, that this Christianity they have adopted is not merely a theory or a change of name or an escape from untouchability, but a new kind of life.

During the years that follow, the children are brought up in that village, not with stories of devils and evil spirits to be propitiated, not even with the far better stories of the Hindu demi-gods, but with the best story of all. Love, not fear, is the background of their life. Service, not self, is the motive which is set before them. It is bound to have its effect, and some of their grandchildren are now serving in Neyyoor Hospital, no longer outcast, but respected by their patients and their friends, no longer frightened of imagined spirits of evil, but happy in their work and thoroughly jolly at their games. They have their faults, of course—who has not? I should be the last person to pretend that they are all perfect. But the little quarrels one occasionally has to settle, and the little dishonesties one is faced with now and then, only serve to call attention to the solid sterling character and real Christian service which most of them show in their life and work.

Others of the great-grandchildren of these same village converts are now in responsible positions in schools and colleges, as doctors and pastors and lawyers, men who are

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respected by their fellow-countrymen, and who often take leading places in the community.

I will tell you a story about one such man. He was a schoolmaster at one of our Mission Boys' Schools. Not very long ago, he had a pain in his leg, which rapidly got worse. Unfortunately, it was the time of the annual hot-weather holiday, and both Orr and I were away from Neyyoor. He went to another hospital, and there a doctor very unfortunately operated on his leg, with insufficiently aseptic methods, and secondarily infected it. A few weeks later we came down from the hills, and soon after our arrival this man turned up at the hospital at Neyyoor. By that time, he was already fairly ill, and we put him to bed and took an X-ray picture of his leg. Alas! The whole bone of the leg (tibia) was affected from top to bottom with tubercular disease, and to this had been added a secondary infection. The outlook for the leg was none too rosy, especially as the patient himself was getting worse and worse. Everything we could do for him seemed to be without avail. The disease is one which medical science reckons to be well-nigh incurable once it has reached this stage. The man was going downhill, and daily getting weaker and more feverish. His leg became more and more painful, and after a few weeks we took another X-ray picture and found that the disease was worse in the whole of the bone involved. There was only one thing to do, and that was to amputate the leg to save the patient's life.

In order to make certain that this advice was right, I sent copies of the radiographs to a surgeon in the Indian Medical Service, who is probably the greatest authority on bone diseases in India, if not in the East. His answer was just as we had expected, that the disease was tubercular, secondarily infected, and the only chance of saving the man's life was to take off his leg at the knee. So we told the poor fellow that there was nothing else to be done. His reply was unexpected: "Will you give me three weeks? I want to try the effect of praying about it." We agreed to

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give him that time, and on the next day he went home. In three weeks he turned up, true to his promise. He had left hospital feverish, ill, flushed in the face, and only capable of being carried about. He returned in a car, but hobbling with a stick and looking much better. The wound in the leg was not healed, but the leg itself, as revealed by the X-rays, was wonderfully improved, though not yet free from the disease.

We were amazed. What had he done to make so great an improvement? He told us, quite simply, that he had been quite sure that it was against the will of God for any of His servants to suffer, and that he had before him a life of service to God if only he could keep both his leg and his life. So he called his family and his friends together, and said to them: "Look here, will you folk unite in prayer for this leg of mine, that it be completely healed?" They agreed and for a week a continuous chain of prayer was kept up by that family. One of them would pray for a quarter of an hour, then another would take it on, and so on for over a week. Well, here before us was the answer. A month ago, he had been going steadily downhill, the leg and his general condition getting worse together—down, down, with no prospect of anything but death unless his leg were removed before he got too bad. Now he was better in general health—his fever had gone, and his leg, though not well, was much better. In another three weeks, he came to see us again. The leg had healed, he was able to walk on it a little, and he appeared almost well. A few months later he was back at his school, perfectly fit and playing games with the boys, running about on both his legs, with no sign of disease. This man, from a family which, a few generations ago, was worshipping devils, and despised as untouchable by the official religion of India, was able to exercise a faith in prayer which we so-called civilized Westerners have forgotten how to use. He and his family had proved that the age of miracles is not over. Who can say what contribution India may not make to the religion

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of the world when she has, like this man and his family, been introduced to God as Christ showed Him?

This is not a unique or isolated case. During the last few months, I saw one even more remarkable. He had had cancer of the cheek, and the disease was so advanced when he came to Neyyoor that I declined to treat him, knowing that operation would be impossible, and it would have taken more radium than our total stock to cure him. Sadly, he went home to die. But he, too, remembering the power of God and the faith that removes mountains, went to his local church, and persuaded his fellow church-members to have frequent and united prayer that his cancer might be cured. Some months later, I was at Attingal, the branch hospital near to his place of abode, and a stalwart and healthy man, with a healed scar on his cheek, came to see me. I did not recognize him, but our Indian doctor there told me this story of him, and said that he had kept in touch with him all through the last few months. The cancer, incurable by any method known to medical science, except radium and X-rays—had completely disappeared. I confess that in my weakness of faith I was amazed; but of the original diagnosis there can be no doubt. If we in Neyyoor, where we see five or six hundred cases of cancer of the mouth every year, cannot diagnose a case of it, who can? Explain these cases how you like, by the power of the mind over the body or by the intervention of God—the fact remains that their faith had been exercised in a way of which we in our materialistic England have no experience.

I have never come across any Hindu who has been able, by the exercise of his faith or religious observance, to effect anything of the same sort. As has already been said, the chief deficiency of the Hindu religion is that all its marvellous power of devotion, of concentration, of renunciation, is of little avail unless applied to the right idea of God. In dealing with the better side of Hinduism, I am convinced that this is the line to take. Christ does not wish to destroy—and He, and He only, can fulfil. We must respect all that

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is good and sincere, offering to India, in humility and as her servants, God as Christ revealed Him. With regard to the popular Hinduism which was briefly described in the preceding chapter, the situation is different. We missionaries are guests of India, and must be loyal to our hosts in what we say or think about them. But we have an even higher loyalty. We are ambassadors of Christ, and cannot yield where His interests are involved. Besides, our very loyalty to our Indian hosts implies that if we see a definitely wrong thing we should in courtesy and humility point it out and direct them to a better way.

In doing so, we must get our own minds straight. We must realize that the evils and deficiencies of popular Hinduism are in many cases seen in other religions as well, and some of them have from time to time bitten like a canker into the various branches of the Christian Church itself. When we find, as we do to-day in England, some of the bishops advocating an increase of armaments, and denouncing pacifism, whilst equally respected leaders of the Church, convinced that only the way of love is right, are calling themselves pacifists—it is obvious that one or the other of these views is wrong. The Church has not yet learned to be Christian in its thought, or it would have settled these points long ago, as have the Quakers. So it is with feelings entirely devoid of superiority that we must carry on as God's ambassadors, and offer our service as friends of India. With the popular religion of the temples, with their atmosphere of sinister import, with the diabolical doings of animistic worship and black magic, with the soul-destroying system of caste, there must be no compromise. These things are evil, and most of them are kept alive by vested interests and by the powers inherent in man that oppose God and goodness. I do not believe that Christ can make use of these things. Though He may use the good things of Vedic Hinduism and become the object of India's devotion, yet, where He comes, evils, such as the religion of the temples, will disappear, for they have no part nor

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lot with Him. And we, His servants, must show them no compromise.

One more contrast. At one of our country branches, when walking from the small house where I usually stay, to the hospital, one has to go along a little lane, some six feet wide, with mud walls on either side. Recently, my wife and I were walking along this little road. Some of the villagers, untouchables according to the dictates of the official religion, were going home from the fields after their day's work, along the same road. Not seeing clearly who we were, for it was late in the evening, they vaguely perceived that someone else was coming towards them. At once they leapt over the wall, and ran off into the fields. They thought we might be some high-caste people, and to get near them or pass them on the road would have been a terrible thing, bringing curses on to their heads from the highly born, who would have been defiled by their proximity. Poor, frightened souls; to the fear of the local devils and evil spirits, a real enough thing to some of them, was added a fear of their fellow-men. You could see it all in the hunted, timid expression in their eyes. That's what it means to be an untouchable.

Now for the contrast—the life of a doctor I know. Though his family comes from this same class of people, yet he has had a Christian upbringing and a good education, and is a doctor of skill and charm, who inspires confidence in his patients. Wherever he goes he is popular. He has among his friends many high-caste people. He is welcomed into the house of anyone in his village, high or low, and his touch as a Christian doctor carries with it no defilement. When he was transferred from the hospital where he had worked for a year or two, to another place which wanted bucking up, those responsible for the transfer had a shower of petitions and two or three mass-meetings to deal with. The whole town, where he had been, wanted him back again. The leading citizens of the place, some of them men of the highest social position, were unanimous in ask-



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ing that he should not be moved. I know, too, that this was the expression of a real trust and friendship they had for him. In all the place, there was no man more popular than this doctor, whose great-grandfather would have had to run away if one of these same men had come anywhere near him. There is only one power on earth that could have caused this transformation—the power of Him who made Himself of no reputation, and took the form of a servant to show us that all men are equal in the sight of God.

Centuries of Hinduism, in spite of their great mystics, have never given the untouchable a chance. Yet, give him a few years of Christianity, and he not only has a chance, but is enabled to make the most of it. Not only does he have an opportunity for social uplift, but the means for developing a character. It is not that Hinduism is bad in itself. Some of the greatest sages of the world have been Hindus; some of the greatest religious literature in the world has come from the Hindus. Some of the stories of Hindu mythology are finer far than many of those in the Old Testament. Rama is a far finer character than Jacob, and Sita or Savitri have few peers in ancient Jewish literature. But there are two great differences. In the Old Testament evil is reckoned as evil, and not merely (as often in Hinduism) taken for granted as the ordinary way in which things are done. Secondly, Hinduism is incomplete, just as are Judaism and Islam. It is only in the New Testament that we find that part of our faith which satisfies and uplifts and gives us peace and power.

Though some of the legends of Vishnu's incarnations are beautiful stories, yet they are continually mixed up with human failings and even sins; the gods are made to use their supernatural powers, with motives which are sometimes mean, and methods which are often deceitful. Fine though may be the devotion, and high the ideal, of some of the Indian sages, yet this background is bound to have its effect, just as the background of Old Testament legend so often warped the thought of the disciples until they had

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really absorbed the new ideas of God which Christ formulated. The Indian's capacity for devotion, and the ideas of renunciation of the world and union with God which are part of the better side of his national religion, make it certain that when that devotion is linked up with the highest idea of God that has yet been vouchsafed to man, something will happen.

We in the West have lost a great deal of the mystical side of our religion. In our materialistic and busy civilization we are too hurried to give the time we ought to give to thought and meditation. Several Indian Christians I know will spend two hours every morning before breakfast in devotion and prayer.

A certain missionary of my acquaintance used to have a boys' school, and took some of the leading Christian boys for a short holiday every year. An hour in the early morning was set aside for devotion. After a few days, some of the boys asked that this hour might be extended, as it was of insufficient length for their prayer and meditation. Would such a thing happen in Britain? It is difficult to see how tremendous may be the contribution that India can make to Christianity.<sup>1</sup> If only we, on our part, can do our share of humble service to India, and interpret to her the matchless idea of God which Christ came to give to the world—if only we can do that as it should be done—then India in her turn will be able to make the spiritual impact on the soul of the human race which may well be the crowning event in the whole world order, the foundation of the Kingdom of God "on earth, as it is in Heaven."

"Leave the Indian in his own religion. He is happier in it, and it suits him. Why bother him with Christianity?" We have all heard that sort of thing some time or other. It is the kind of falsehood which can only be

<sup>1</sup> For a fuller exposition of this important thesis, see J. C. Winslow *The Indian Mystic*, S.C.M., 1s. 6d.

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described as criminal. "To the man of discernment, everything is misery." So says the *Yoga-sutra*, one of the old Hindu Vedas. To this cry from India's soul, the answer of Christ rings loud and true: "Your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

## CHAPTER XXIX

### CASTE AND CUSTOMS

THE LIFE OF A MISSIONARY DOCTOR BRINGS HIM INTO MORE intimate association with the people of the country than almost any other life. If he knows the language pretty well, he will be able to see how the village people live, what they talk and think about, what ideals they have, what their religion and what their homes are like—apart altogether from their diseases and the problems in health and psychology for which he is called into consultation.

In this way one has many interesting experiences, some of them extremely amusing, others tragic and poignant. When I first went to South India, I confess to a feeling of loneliness in spite of the interest of the work and the many people, mostly hospital workers, with whom I was constantly surrounded. Quite quickly the loneliness disappeared—when I learned the language. I wasn't fluent at Tamil at first, and I made the most frightful mistakes, forgetting to call people by the right degree of honorifics, and all sorts of things like that. But I was able in some measure to make friends with the people. As soon as that began, I found what a lovable and attractive people they are. Of course, they have their faults, and so have we; and the longer I live in India the more clearly do I see that the faults of an Indian are almost invariably the same faults that we have got, though perhaps in different proportion.

When we do surgical operations on Indians, we cut through a brown skin, and find that their muscles and bones, stomach and liver and all the rest of them are exactly like our own. Now I believe, though I am no

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psychologist, that if one were to do the same to the Indian mind one would find that it, too, is fundamentally the same as ours. The differences of environment, climate, and religion, and all sorts of other things, have made a superficial but very real covering over the mind that is inside—a covering that is sometimes hard to penetrate, and is often difficult to distinguish from the deep qualities of the true Indian mind. Yet I am convinced that the Indian has the same potentialities as anyone else, and responds to trust and generosity—and unfriendliness and superiority, too—just like anyone else would do.

The differences, however, between the Indians and ourselves are sometimes very amusing to us, as no doubt our queer ways often seem comic to them. The most striking difference in the social life of India from that of other nations is, of course, caste. Every nation has some sort of social order, although such people as the Finns and Swedes are singularly free from it. In England it is rather bad. If a Baron marries his kitchen-maid, the papers sit up and take notice. Striking differences exist between, for instance, the ranks of charwomen. In some places, especially in Scotland where the old clan system holds yet in a certain measure, you are considered beyond the pale if you marry "out of the place." We have our front and back doors, and some of us expect certain others of us to call us "sir." So let us not throw stones at the idea of caste—we have got it ourselves. But there is a great and fundamental difference.

In India, caste is bound up with the religion of the country, and is absolutely rigid and inflexible. It is impossible for an outcaste ever to become a caste man, or for a "low"-caste Sudra to become a "high"-caste Brahmin. In strict Indian society, intermarriage of castes is completely forbidden. There is an awful fatality—a sinister thing sometimes—about the way in which everyone's future is entirely settled for them at birth. If you are the son of an untouchable, you are untouchable—and that's that. There is no

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way out if you are loyal to your religion ; and few indeed are the Indians who are not kept controlled and " taped " by their religious system far more rigidly than even the most rigid sections of the Roman Catholic Church. Your position in life is entirely a matter of birth, and there is no escape whatever, neither for yourself nor for any of your descendants to all generations. It is that fact which in these present days is driving so many of the outcastes to escape from this age-long fatality by joining some other religion. In certain of the old Hindu scriptures only the first three castes can ever attain " salvation " even in the next world ; in most others this privilege is entirely denied to all outcastes, only the four castes <sup>1</sup> being able to look forward to anything in the nature of what we call eternal life. Among our own nation, there are many who entirely disbelieve in anything of the nature of eternal life, and perhaps thereby deny themselves the chance of attaining it ; but this is purely a voluntary business, simply a matter of free will. The Hindu religion knows nothing of that. Man's destiny is laid down for him, and all he can do to affect the future is to keep the rules of his religion strictly in this life, in the hope that in the next incarnation he may get a step up, a fraction nearer in the social scale to what is the supreme desire of most Hindus—to become a Brahmin. If ever he can become a Brahmin, then he is sure of salvation, to say nothing of a better chance in this world. If a Brahmin, he is then able to move about with a feeling of superiority over—not to say disdain for—his fellow-men who are not so fortunate as to have been " twice-born." Notice that the doctrine of a rebirth is here implied, but

<sup>1</sup> Brahmins (the " upper ten "), Chattryas (fighters), Vaisyas (traders, etc.), and Sudras (farmers). The *Upanishads* and *Vedānta* consider only the first three castes capable of redemption. The *Samkhya* (a later scripture, written about the fifth century A.D.) considers that all men can be saved. See introduction to *The Bhagavad Gita* (Temple Classics, J. M. Dent), by Lionel D. Barnett, for a summary of the teaching of the Hindu scriptures on these points. Also, go on to read the *Gita* itself ; it has portions of real fine stuff.

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once again it is subject to laws and not to free will. When a man realizes, whether it be gradually or suddenly, that the true aim of life is to give it in service and the true aim of thought is to attain to a way of thinking that is God's way ; then we say he is born again. With the Hindu it is different. The sins of former incarnations (thousands of them—I mean the incarnations ; the sins perhaps run into millions) have determined the status and caste of this life. If the happy person in question has become a Brahmin, then it means that his previous lives must have been of super-excellent quality.

In early adolescence, a ceremony takes place by which the Brahmin boy is invested with the sacred thread, worn over his shoulder next his skin for the rest of his life. After this ceremony he is said to be twice-born. So we find the expression, which we Westerners use (often too glibly, like a catchword) of the Christian life, applied to the Hindu life, but there dependent upon inexorable rules and the performance of a ceremony. This is once again a striking instance of the difference in attitude between the two religions—or rather of the two ways of looking at things, for I refuse to believe that Christianity is a mere religion. One of the greatest mistakes of history is the mistake the Church has made so consistently, of replacing discipleship by dogma.

Side-tracked again on to the main line—let's get back to the social system of India and its effect on the ordinary man. Where everything by the law of Karma is pre-determined, a lot of the spice of life is taken away. However high one's ambition, it can never be attained, nor even approached, if it be not consistent with one's position in the caste system. This is the root of the well-known and often touching fatalism, so characteristic of the East, and especially of the Hindu. Of all things that warp the soul of man, fatalism is one of the worst. Any psychologist can tell of the harm that can be done by a pessimistic attitude ; it requires no psychologist to show us cases in

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our everyday experience who take every circumstance as a cause for worry, and who are so convinced that all is going wrong that they make life all go wrong. But turn that same mind from fatalistic pessimism to a cheerful attitude, and you have a new character with all the potentialities for a fine and useful life. Think of the possibilities of India, whose implicit belief in Karma on the Hindu side, and in "the will of Allah" in the Moslem community, is leading her children into a completely fatalistic view of life. Think of the latent optimism and happiness, of the millions of lives that might be made "worth while"—if only India can be given that cheerfulness and optimism which Christianity can but feebly give, but which Christ can give to the full. They "call us to deliver" them—and to deliver the goods, too, which is not dogma nor denomination, but the Love of God and the Brotherhood of Man, trust in God and obedience to Him.

Caste is firmly embedded in the Indian mind, so much so that many Indian Christians take several generations to throw it off. My own cook was not allowed to be married in the "Christian" church next door to his father-in-law's house. The wedding party had to go across country for a mile to a little village barber's church; his community was the barber caste, and caste had stuck in the local Christians' minds to this extent during fifty years or more of Christianity. Like all other vested interests, caste is hard to get rid of. It is indeed a vested interest, and is exploited to the full by those—such as some of the priests—who can make something out of it.

Mr. Gandhi, one of the noblest souls of India, however unpractical many people may think him, has had scant success in his praiseworthy efforts to deliver the untouchable from certain of his disabilities. He saw that the basis of untouchability was religious, and that the only place to attack it was the temple, symbol and centre of the religious life of the towns and villages. He demanded that the rights of man should be granted to the outcaste, and that



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he should be admitted into the temples. But here he found himself up against the vested interests of the classes which keep the outcaste out. Though certain high-souled men of the Hindu community have responded, yet in many parts of India no single untouchable has been allowed one yard nearer the temples in spite of Mr. Gandhi's campaign. And, if anyone could have brought it off, Mr. Gandhi could have done so, with the universal respect in which he is held. Vested interests won in most places ; but it is a barren victory, for it has led to the very decision that has already been mentioned, the resolution of many outcastes to leave the religion that has for centuries deprived them of the rights of human beings, and go to some other faith which offers them something more worthy in the way of manhood.

In Travancore, however, in November 1936, His Highness the Maha Raja issued an edict that all Hindu Temples controlled by the Travancore Government should open their gates to Hindus of all castes. This is a really great event in the history of Hinduism, and of human relationships, and in my opinion is a real triumph for Christian Principles. That this most hide-bound and conservative religion should recognize Christ's cardinal principle of the equality of man is a tremendous thing.<sup>1</sup>

The caste system is not an unmixed evil. It has given a solidarity to Indian society which has stood the test of centuries ; but just as one cannot accept the present social conditions of England as being in accordance with the Christian ideal, so, while seeing the better side of caste, one cannot but condemn it. In doing so, one finds that many of the more enlightened Hindus are of the same opinion, and in some of the large cities, with their more advanced education, inter-caste marriages have already taken place. This is a very large step towards the abolition of caste, which is bound to come sooner or later. In an

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion on this event, see B. Mathews's book, *India Reveals Herself*, pp. 131, 132.

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immense country like India, it will be a slow process—the East moves proverbially slowly, largely because it is so big. Meanwhile, there are millions of our fellow-men who are denied any change from the life of their fathers and cousins and aunts, and for whom it is totally impossible to associate with those “above” them in society, or to take a meal in their houses with them. Often have I been at marriages in India where a certain section of the guests cannot eat in the same room, or tent, with other sections. In some of the wilder parts of Travancore I have seen a high-caste man walking along the road with another man some fifty yards in front of him to drive the outcastes off the road before the great one comes along. Their presence within a certain number of yards would contaminate him; if the shadow of one of them fell on his food, he would throw it away as uneatable, and if one of them touched him, he would have to spend a long time washing in a ceremonial fashion to get rid of the terrible stain of such a contact. But that sort of thing, though once common enough, is getting rarer as time goes on, and in the same country of Travancore it is a usual thing for Brahmin boys to sit next to outcastes in many of the schools and colleges. In Neyyoor Hospital I have often seen Brahmin patients in the next bed to untouchables. A new day is dawning—woe to that day if it is heralded by a mere rationalistic civilization and not by a real love of mankind.

Next to caste, the thing which is most striking to Westerners is the Indian patience. Anyone who has travelled in India has noticed the station platforms crowded with people—whole families, camping-out, as it were, and waiting for the train next day. If they miss the train, it doesn't really matter—there will be another in twenty-four hours. In a country where it is nearly always too hot, and where it is certain to be fine at night, you might as well live on a station platform as anywhere else. Besides, there is nothing to do at home except to watch the rice grow. Impatience is considered one of the worst of

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sins in India, and a Britisher like myself who likes to get a move on and, having a lot of things to do in the day, is often in a hurry, feels it very hard not to be impatient. I find myself often humiliated by the extreme patience and courtesy of Indians in contrast to my own hastiness and brusque manners. Unfortunately, at Neyyoor, we have got considerably more to do than merely watching the rice grow, and one simply must hustle, and get other people to hustle, too. Many of our workers are efficient—and true efficiency gets things done quickly without fuss and hurrying. That is what we aim at, but when it doesn't go quite smoothly—well, I fear I fail to show the patience which one ought to show, and at which the Indians are so exemplary.

I have seen a local-government building surrounded by people, some of whom had been there, living on its verandas, for a week or more. The bribe required before their business can be attended to is too high, and they just camp out and wait for it to come down to a price they can afford. In our hospital, we often see the same thing. We charge a fee for operation; the patient thinks it is too high, and is quite content, if the disease is not too urgent, to wait until the fees come down. The other day, a little girl was brought to Neyyoor by her father for the removal of a large tumour in her jaw. With the tumour she was unmarriageable, unless the father was prepared to give an immense dowry with her. Without it she would be quite a pretty girl, and require a much smaller dowry to get her off the shelf. So the operation would save the family a considerable sum of money—probably two thousand rupees or more. They were fairly well off, and we were only charging a hundred rupees for the operation. A very moderate sum—only seven pounds sterling—and we could not think of “coming down,” as the hospital has got to be run somehow. But the girl's father thought it too much, and he took a lodging in Neyyoor village, and waited. After three weeks, the fee didn't come down, so

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he went away. I was sorry for the little girl—it wasn't her fault that she had a stingy father—but we had to stick to our principles. If once we start bargaining, there will be no end to it. Our medical men thought we would see them back again, and, sure enough, about three weeks later they came, offering seventy rupees. Again they waited in the village for many days until finally coming to the figure asked for. The operation was done, and the girl is now a pretty and attractive little thing. Quite a good economical proposition, in fact.

That is the tragedy of many marriages in South India. Marriage is entirely a commercial affair. The wife is chosen by the parents. In some circles, in spite of legislation, the notorious child marriage still goes on—the bride being three or four years old and the husband eight or ten, and the first marriage ceremony taking place at that tender age. It is claimed by the supporters of this system that it prevents the husband from fooling about with other girls, and also that, by it, the bride's parents get rid of their responsibility for keeping their little girl and preserving her chastity, by throwing it on to the bridegroom and his people. But an Indian lady of my acquaintance once told me: "I've *had* child marriage, and I know what it means, and I'm not going to let any of my children have it." The more enlightened women of India are solid against it, and there are signs that, like caste, but more rapidly, it is breaking up. In those communities—now the greater part—where child marriage is not practised, the commercialization of matrimony is often a tragic affair. It is particularly bad in Travancore. I know of many boys whose parents were unable to pay for the completion of their education. So they chose a wife for them, if possible an old and unattractive wife, so as to get with her a bigger dowry. Then the son is able to finish his education by means of the dowry.

A well-educated Indian Christian boy whom I knew very well was about to be married. I asked him:

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"Well, what's your wife like? I hope you really feel you love her and are going to be happy."

"I've never seen her."

"But don't you want to see her? You're going to be married next week."

"No. My mother and father have seen her. That's quite enough for me."

They were married, but, I fear, not happily.

I was talking to a few college students the other day.

"What are you studying?" I said to one.

"History."

"What for? What profession are you going in for?"

"I want a B.A."

"Whatever do you want a B.A. for?"

"For a dowry."

A B.A. in our part of India is pretty sure of a dowry of two thousand rupees. Of that small group of boys the majority were being educated at college in order to command a bigger dowry in the marriage market.

One day last year I went, on an extremely busy morning, to an Indian wedding, because the bridegroom was a friend of mine—in fact, one of our hospital staff. The wedding was several hours late. The party simply would not arrive at the church, and I had to go away, after waiting over two hours, to get on with hospital work. The cause of the delay was a quarrel about the dowry—as to how much of it should be tied up legally to prevent the husband from using it.

Alas, the Christian community in our part are often worse than the Hindu or any other class of people with regard to these dowries. I have known a coolie, living on a few shillings a month, forced by custom to give the equivalent of ten years' wages for the expenses of his daughter's marriage. Besides the absurdly large dowry, there was also the necessity for a sufficiently elaborate feast to prevent the poor man being, as he put it, "ashamed." Just

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as so often in England it is among the lower social orders that the necessity for keeping up appearances is most urgent, so it is in India. Here was a typical case; a coolie with eight rupees a month spending three hundred on a dowry, as well as a lot more for the expenses of a feast at which several hundred people got a good meal of curry and rice.

That sort of thing is the normal custom in our part of India. What is its result? How can a man earning a few rupees a month suddenly obtain several hundreds? There are only two ways—the worse evil, a money-lender, and the lesser evil, a “chitty.” This latter is a convenient and characteristically Indian system designed for just this very purpose. Ten or twenty people join together and subscribe, say, two rupees a month—that is, twenty-four a year for five years, to the chitty manager. Total, a hundred and twenty rupees. Any time during these five years he can have this sum, but if he wants it early on in the time he has to take less, and the settling of this amount is often done by a kind of auction among the members of the chitty. The more urgently the man wants his money, the harder are the terms imposed, whether it is by chitty members or by money-lenders. By whichever of these two ways he obtains his money, he is pretty sure to be crippled, financially speaking, for many years—perhaps for the whole of his life. Many are the fathers who have died leaving to their sons nothing but debts to chitty managers and money-lenders.

Thus it may be said that the system of commercialized marriage is socially a real and terrible evil, driving many poor people into the hands of men who are proverbially unscrupulous, and forcing them into a position from which the easiest way out is to steal. You might expect, therefore, that theft would be a very common offence; but on the whole I should say that it is not—the Southern Indian has a great deal of honesty in his make-up, and though he thinks nothing of a slightly crooked deal, and often fails

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to honour his obligations, yet the smallness of amount of definite theft among the crimes in the country villages has always seemed to me to be a very striking thing. I have left my car about in all sorts of places and at all sorts of times in India—an open car, usually full of things ("Saman," as we say out there). Yet on only three occasions has anything been stolen from the car, and one of those was my fault entirely—for not putting my car in the charge of a robber whilst leaving it near a village where the robber caste, or "maravas," live.

These maravas are charming people, and some of the best and most truly patient inmates of our hospital are maravas. If put in charge of a thing, a marava will be very faithful in fulfilment of his trust. On this occasion, I failed to put one in charge of the car. The result was—the car now has no clock. *Peccavi*. I had sinned against the caste, and the caste paid me out. Loyalty to the caste is a strong, and sometimes a fine characteristic of India. But, like patriotism or any other loyalty save loyalty to God, it works both ways. It sometimes leads a man in a Government post to sack all his underlings and replace them by members of his own family or caste. I know of an extreme case of this, in which a village magistrate employed his whole family in one way or another in his court. Finally, only his old father was left unemployed. What could he do? The only job left was the pulling of the punkah. So the punkah coolie was dispensed with, and the young judge now sits in state, dispensing equity, kept cool the while by the sweat of his father's brow as the old man pulls away at the rope of the punkah.

On the other hand, loyalty to caste embodies in it an even more extreme loyalty to family, and the family life in India is a very delightful thing. The Indian often treats his children too well, "spoiling" them, as we should say. But I know no people on earth who are nicer to children, and more obviously fond of them, than the Southern Indians. Family loyalty is charmingly expressed

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as family love. But there is a snag. Family loyalty can also mean inter-family feuds. Litigation is a very popular hobby, as has already been mentioned. It leads to family jealousy, malice, and continual scrapping which often lasts for years. The reason for its popularity is complex. First, there is the fact that so few Indians, even when they have learned to read and can do so fluently, make use of this knowledge to any great extent. Vernacular literature is limited in amount, and is not cheap. In most cases Indian families, especially in the villages, cannot afford to buy books, and the result is that, on the average, the Indian is not a great reader. He therefore has little to do, in his leisure hours, but to talk. Talk becomes gossip, gossip becomes scandal—and the seeds of litigation are sown.

Then there is the presence of numerous lawyers, many of them poorly qualified, some of whom foster family quarrels as providing their source of income. If an Indian boy is educated up to Matriculation standard, and fails to get a clerical or similar job, he is very likely to put up his plate, so to speak, as a "vakil" or advocate. The smattering of law he has acquired is enough to demand a small fee, and the poorer villagers will employ this class of vakil, not being able to afford the fees of those who are better qualified. The demand has created a supply, and the supply, made in this way excessive, has to create a further demand, which is easily done by fostering discontent and advising one's acquaintances to "go to law about it" rather than to forgive and be friends. A vicious circle is thus established. Although India needs doctors so badly, yet the majority of Indians who come to Europe for their higher education enter the legal profession, in which high fees are often obtained. Whatever its causes, this tendency to rush into law cases about petty family affairs and imagined insults is one of the major tragedies of India.

A sad, but true, story which illustrates this side of Indian village life far more forcibly than anything else



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could do was told me by a villager recently: I reproduce it in a close approximation to his own words.

"My uncle had some coco-nuts stolen from his land, and brought the thieves to justice, with the result that they had to pay up. Then the usual family feud started. The thieves are all members of a large family whose record is not very honourable. The head of their family married four times, throwing out one wife after another if they didn't produce male children. His last wife was five months' pregnant, and these rowdies, fearing another son would be born to share the family property, and that, in consequence, they themselves would get a smaller share, cut her throat. In this, they were unsuccessful, their knowledge of anatomy not being accurate.' So she survived, and a case was taken against the one who did the knifing. He was not convicted, nor any of his accomplices, as they had enough money to bribe themselves off. But although he had paid the magistrate, he had forgotten to pay some of the police, and one or two policemen felt that something ought to be done about it. So they got hold of him one day, strung him up to a tree, and beat his legs till one of them was broken. Thus, the man got his deserts all right. Eventually, a male child was born, and is now a healthy little boy. The knifing episode may be said to have failed completely.

"Well, this family of rascals have sworn for a long time that they would get even with my uncle for bringing them to justice years ago. One day an opportunity occurred. My uncle was away, and had left me in charge of the house. A goat was tied up near to the door, and one of these scoundrels came along, not knowing I was there, and started to untie the goat. I soon stopped him, but he called to the others (who were near at hand), and they beat me off and took the goat. Here are the scars of the beating." (They looked pretty hefty ones, too.) "We didn't take a case against this family, as we couldn't possibly win it. But, unfortunately, daylight robbery with

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violence is a case for State prosecution, so the Government are prosecuting. But it's no good; the other side have paid our lawyer far more than we can afford to pay him, so he hasn't called any of our witnesses, and only asked completely fatuous questions. That's the worst of some of the Government lawyers—they get money from *both* sides, whilst the other kind only get the fee from their clients."

This story is reproduced here, not merely to interest the reader, nor with any suggestion that the lawyers in India are usually such double-dealers as the one in the tale. But it gives a sad picture of something that happens constantly in India, and in many other countries besides, a picture of enmity and jealousy and oppression, a depressing and horrible background for village life.

A more Gilbertian and less uniformly tragic incident occurred in Neyyoor not long since. A boy was admitted at the point of death, with a terrible fracture of his skull, the result of being knocked down by a motor-car. An inspector of police and a few other people accompanied him, and kept asking me how he was. I told them it was no use doing anything, and in half an hour he died. At once a man (presumably the owner of the car) went up to the police inspector and talked very excitedly and suspiciously to him. The inspector then came along to me, and said: "I don't want to bother you with the post-mortem of this case. Send it along to the Government hospital at — and don't trouble to do it yourself." Of course I smelt a rat. Plans were being made for returning a verdict that didn't involve the owner of the car. But, as I hold that one of the duties of a missionary is to see that things are done straight, I felt bound to stop this little game. I confess to some sympathy with the driver—I know how difficult it is to avoid knocking pedestrians down in India, where there are crowds of people about and no footpaths to walk on. But the higher duty came first, and I told the inspector that I was bound by

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law to do the post-mortem, as the case had been brought to me by the police and was under my charge. Again and again he tried to persuade me that I was far too busy to bother with a post-mortem; he even came to my bungalow after dinner and did his best to impress upon me how much more convenient it would be for me to send along the corpse to —. I was unmoved by this touching consideration, and told him that I realized there was dirty work afoot, and would have nothing to do with it.

I went to bed as usual, and at 2 a.m. was awakened by our humorous and efficient orderly, Chelliah, who was very much out of breath.

"Sir. Could you please come? Two police constables came along and told me that you had given orders that I should give them the mortuary key, but I didn't believe them. So now they are trying to break open the mortuary door. What shall I do?"

"Tell them," I said, "that if that corpse isn't in the post-mortem room to-morrow morning when I come to do the p.m., I shall go straight to Trivandrum and tell the Commissioner of Police the whole story."

In the morning, the corpse was there all right. The post-mortem was only a matter of form, the frightful injuries to the head being enough to kill anyone. Months later, the case came off, and the driver of the car put up as his defence that the boy had rushed against the car with his head down whilst it was going slowly along the road. This cock-and-bull story failed to convince, especially as I could not conscientiously support it with my medical evidence. The driver lost his licence for three years and, I believe, got into jail as well.

In the stories just recited, we get a glimpse of something which is characteristic, not only of India, but of most other Eastern nations—the corruption of justice. It is a great evil, and a very widespread one, but we must always remember that the judicial and parliamentary life

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of Britain was rife with corruption not so very long ago. The infamous treaty which Clive made with Mir J'afar, and his betrayal of Amirchand, are too well known to bear repetition. The selfish policy of the East India Company was a sordid foundation-stone for the connection of Britain with India. Some of the civil servants in India in the early days feathered their nests very comfortably with bribes and similar ill-gotten gains, and their pay had to be raised to put a stop to this custom.

At home, things were just as bad, for bribery was taken for granted, and the country was governed by a Parliament of whose members many were elected from pocket boroughs, and others only attained the House of Commons by wading through a sea of drink. But England has been saved from these things, so that, at the present time, the Britisher, with all his faults, is respected throughout the world for even-handed and honest justice. The student of modern history cannot fail to see that the power which has saved England from corruption is the recognition by the country at large of Christian principles. The Evangelical Revival brought it home to the man in the street that Christianity is not an official church, nor an ideal for only the few, but is a personal relationship between man and God. Ever since then, Christian principles have been gradually developing the public conscience of Britain. Though we are still learning them, and have not yet learned to apply them to international relationships, yet we are amazingly nearer to recognizing the essential equality of all men than we were even fifty years ago. The power that has saved Britain's public life in such large measure from corruption can save India from the same evil, although, just as it has been a slow process with Britain, it may be expected to be even slower in an immense country like India. But that is no reason for delay or discouragement. Where Christ comes in, corruption will go out, and the better and nobler sides of India's character provide us with a hope that she may one day lead the nations of the East in

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the throwing-off of bribery and the oppression and misery which inevitably follow in its train.

In the West we see the nations in need of mutual forbearance, understanding, and love. This is the only possible solution of their problems, and the only workable substitute for the diplomacy which caused the Great War, and for the legalism of collective security which has been found wanting more recently. Likewise for the individual, whether in India or elsewhere, love is the only power which can put an end to quarrelling and family feuds, to lifelong litigation, and to the oppression which inevitably follows in the wake of corruption. Love is the only power which can turn these unhappy things into happiness. In the solution of these problems, once again, we find that Christ holds the only key which fits the lock. "That they may be one"—not a league of nations, but a United States of Europe, Asia, and all the other continents as well. The only alternative to that is suicide.

## CHAPTER XXX

### INDIAN THINKING

ONE OF THE THINGS WHICH A EUROPEAN NOTICES VERY definitely after his arrival in India is that the Indian's mind seems to work in very different ways from his own. Many of these ways seem to him queer and amusing ; some of them may seem touching or pathetic. Some excite his interest, others his sympathy or his anger or impatience. But in very many ways the Indian seems to look at life from a different angle, and to do things in a totally different way. An American writer recently said : " In India, everything either rattles, squeaks, or doesn't fit." In this, he expressed something that must have struck many a Westerner. Ganapati, the Indian god of good luck, is the casual, patient god who doesn't care. The other Hindu demigods have " viharas," animals on which they ride, and with which they are especially associated. But, so goes the legend, Ganapati, the casual and easy-going, said : " Why all these great animals like the bull and the lion ? A mouse is good enough for me." So his *vihara* is a mouse.

Considering that there are such long periods in the year when the Indian cultivator has to be idle, there is no wonder that he is so easy-going. India has thus a special and almost universal affection for Ganapati and his little mouse. As long as it works somehow, what matter if it rattle or squeak or doesn't fit ? At the same time, some of the Indian carpenters are marvellous in their accuracy, and in Travancore the humblest house very often has well-mortised and carved rafters ; the poorest family usually keeps its grain (paddy) in a chest of exquisite finish and

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workmanship. No single ant must be admitted to the rice chest, and the carpenter sees to it that his work allows no crevice to exist. Like most comments of the West upon the East, it is only a half-truth to say that things don't fit; but it does, at any rate, bring out the easy-going patience of India.

Another remarkable thing about India is her apparently casual way of thinking. The Indian will often accept a substitute as if it were equal in value with the real thing. He has great respect for a sannyasi—the devotee who has renounced the world, and, clad in a saffron cloth, wanders from temple to temple. But how few Indians differentiate between the true devotee and the idle scoundrel who puts on the required clothes and adopts the sannyasi's life simply in order to get free food without having to work for it! If a missionary wants to "go down" well with the Indian, let him put on a cassock, or similar dress, and they will "fall" for him every time! Few stop to inquire what the cassock signifies. Closely allied to this casual outlook is the fact, which we Westerners fail to understand, that so many Indian minds are capable of being deluded by a superstition even though all evidence contradicts it.

An Indian science master was teaching in a college on the subject of astronomy, and explaining how the earth's shadow, cast by the sun, causes the eclipses of the moon. The missionary who was the principal of the college happened to come round to the classroom whilst this lesson was going on. A few days later, the science master came to the principal's room, and asked if he might have a day's leave.

"What for?" asked the principal.

"There's an eclipse of the moon to-morrow, and I must go to my temple."

"Well, can't you fit that in with your work? The exams. are near, and we don't want the boys to fail because they don't know their science properly."

"Oh, but, sir, I must go to the temple at the right times

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of day. If I don't do that, to perform my worship properly, the Dragon that swallows the moon won't let it go again."

"What! Dragon swallowing the moon? I heard you the other day teaching your boys that eclipses were due to the shadow of the earth. Now, just tell me—which do you believe? The Dragon swallowing the moon, or the shadow of the earth obscuring it?"

"Sir, I believe with my intellect what I teach the boys; but with my spirit I believe in the Dragon."

An Englishman who has been in India for many years and has many Indian friends once expressed rather forcibly this Indian indifference to evidence: "If you and I were arguing, and an undoubted fact was mentioned, it might alter the whole course of the argument, and our conclusion would have to conform to that fact. But if an Indian meets a fact, he can jump it just like a horse jumps a hurdle in a steeplechase!"

An interesting "kink," as we should call it, in Indian thought is that when a statement is printed, something happens to its significance. I often have to teach my medical men surgical facts which I have found out from my own experience, but which are absent from the text-books. Such things are always received with incredulity. "Sir, we cannot believe it. It is not in the text-books. But if you get it printed in a book, we will believe it!"

A few years ago I was present at a trial for murder. The murdered man having been admitted shortly before his death into our hospital, I had to give medical evidence in the court. The murder was said to have been committed in a room about eight feet square in a small Indian house. The plaintiff, who was a man of means, had raked up scores of witnesses, every one of whom swore he was in the room at the time the murder was committed. The judge never seemed to notice that this large crowd could not possibly have got into the room at one time, and the defending counsel made no point about this in his cross-examination.

The same casual method of thought is seen in the Indian's



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reaction to history. Whether the events actually occurred or are mere legends and inventions seems to trouble many Indians not at all, and obviously fantastic myths are accepted by the public as possessing equal validity with undoubted historic facts. As Meredith Townsend puts it,

“ the Asiatic can believe in the teeth of evidence, and he is possessed by the fatal idea that falsehood is an exercise of the intellect like any other, to be judged of by its object and its success . . . he has neglected history with a carelessness which, in view of his reverence for the past, is most difficult to explain,”

except on the assumption that historic fact is of no more interest nor importance to him than is man-made legend.

It is the same characteristic that has made Hinduism such a tolerant religion. The truth or probability of legends and stories matters little ; the plausibility of the tenets of various sects or subdivisions is never questioned ; the Indian will theorize for hours on the nature of the universe or the properties of the soul, but many Indians will not stop to consider whether their theories or arguments have any relation to probability or conform with fact. Mohammedanism has been kept apart from Hinduism largely by its intolerance, and under the tolerant Akbar India very nearly obtained one religion combining both. The fanatical Aurangzeb stopped all that in his zeal for maintaining the integrity of Islam, and Islam has been intolerant of Hinduism ever since.

This casual attitude towards truth, though most strikingly seen in a country like India, is not by any means unknown in England. Many of us profess to believe that God rules the world, and yet would not think of walking under a ladder, or throwing away a mascot from our motor-car. Only to-day, someone said to my wife : “ I am not superstitious, but I wouldn't dream of killing a spider.” We say we cannot understand the Indian's callousness towards truth ; but if we only examined our-

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selves, many of us would find that we, also, are to blame. In fact, it may be repeated that the Indian mind, if we examine it more closely, seems to be fundamentally the same as our own, and his faults are ours, although in different proportions. A Scottish Calvinist is annoyed by belief in Kismet, although he believes almost exactly the same thing himself.

A characteristic of India which is often amusing is the habit of going the long way round to get a thing done. When an Indian comes to call on me, it may, of course, be a polite call or an expression of friendliness or gratitude. It may, however, be that species of gratitude which is an expectation of favours to come. But at first there is no means of telling. Even if he has come on important business, or for a definite purpose, such as the all-too-common request for a letter recommending himself or one of his relations for a job, this purpose will never be divulged until he is just about to leave. Polite conversation, inquiries about health and family, talk about politics and the weather ; half an hour of these may lead one to believe that the caller is friendly or grateful ; and then, just as he is leaving, there will come the " by the way, could you give me a letter to the Postmaster-General ? My son is a very deserving case, and if you give me a letter he will certainly get a job." The real business is always the last thing to be talked about, and as often as not it is never mentioned to me at all, but my wife is separately approached and asked to do all she can to influence me to do whatever it may be that our friend wishes to be done.

An English friend of mine once made a discovery in his house of a pile of post cards. Thinking them to be for him, he started reading them, but soon found they were not *for* him but *about* him. It was, I fear, too much for his curiosity, and he continued to read them. The post cards had been written to a man who had that very day come up to apply for a job in his firm, leaving these post cards behind by mistake. They consisted of bulletins

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issued daily by his own butler about his state of health. "Master receiving English mail to-day, very happy." . . . "Master angry to-day, advise to keep away for a few days" . . . "Master taking Epsom salts to-day; he will be very cheerful and happy in two days' time" . . . and so on. The butler, doubtless for a consideration, had sent these reports about his master's psychological condition to the would-be applicant for a job, in order that he might approach him with his application at the most auspicious moment. I never heard whether the man got the job—but he certainly had common sense as one of his recommendations.

I wonder how many times this has been done to me?

On one occasion, a man whom I had never seen before was very anxious to get a job in a Government department. He came to my bungalow two or three times to try to persuade me to give him a letter, but I kept firmly to my usual rule never to recommend anyone for any job unless I knew him well and could honestly say that I felt him to be suitable for the post. In India, the criterion of fitness for a job is not so much efficiency or ability, but the recommendation of an influential person. I feel it is part of one's duty to Indian society to do a small share in reforming this undesirable system by declining to recommend anybody for anything unless one is convinced of his suitability. So our friend went away empty-handed on each occasion, although I wasted a lot of time in trying to persuade him that I had very good reasons for refusing to give him, of whose character I had no knowledge at all, the letter he required.

A few weeks later, a woman was admitted into one of our female<sup>1</sup> wards with many aches and pains and complaints, but a careful examination failed to elicit any signs of disease. After keeping her under observation for a few

<sup>1</sup> The word "female" is much used by English-speaking Indians. On the occasion of King George V's Jubilee, I saw in a small village a large and carefully-executed streamer bearing the words, "God Bless our King and his Honourable Female."

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days, we still could find no trace of any real illness, and sent her home. During this time, a man, apparently her husband, was in attendance upon her, bringing her meals along whenever our regulations permitted the entry of a man with a meal into the women's quarters. I thought I had seen him before, but in a large and busy hospital one does not have much time to notice patients' relations and friends, so I paid little attention to him. On the last day, however, this man came to my bungalow. Then I realized who he was—the man who, a month before, had so persistently asked me for a "recommendation letter." He was as bold as brass. "Now, sir," he said, "you said you only gave letters to those whom you know. My wife has been in hospital; and you saw me several times there, so *you know me now*. Sir, please give me a letter." The whole business of the wife's illness was a put-up job, entirely staged so that I might no longer be able to say: "I don't know you, and so I won't give you a letter." I fear that his well-thought-out plan was wasted, for he didn't get his letter—but he almost earned it for ingenuity in scheming!

It is this habit of going the long way round that has earned India a reputation in Britain for going the *wrong* way round. But India's way is not always the wrong way; in fact, it is very often far more right than the British way of doing things. Witness the remarkable non-cooperation movement which Mr. Gandhi started over ten years ago, and which has been going on in varying degrees ever since. Not only was this a superb exhibition of turning the other cheek, on a national scale, but it attained a measure of success that violent or revolutionary methods could never have produced. It was, in fact, only when the movement showed signs of violence (owing to the behaviour of certain sections of the people<sup>1</sup> who failed to recognize the true principles of Satyagraha) that it became a failure,

<sup>1</sup> Notably the Chauri Chaura outrage, on February 4th, 1922, when twenty-one policemen were battered to death by "volunteers" and excited peasants.

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and was "called off" by Mr. Gandhi. For perhaps the first time in history it was definitely shown that non-resistance is the only way to a real victory.

Whatever views one may have as to the rights of the case, there can be only one opinion as to the supreme rightness of the methods of the non-resisters as compared with the traditional methods of governments. Amid the medley of quaint and sinister which characterizes Indian methods of thinking, non-violence stands out as a definitely good and exemplary principle which must command the respect of all.

Satyagraha,<sup>1</sup> as an Indian characteristic, dates from a very early time. Calamus of Taxila, probably a Buddhist philosopher, wrote to Alexander the Great: "Our bodies you may indeed remove from place to place, but our souls you will never compel to that which they do not will, any more than you can compel wood and stone to utter sounds." He afterwards burnt himself alive as the preferable alternative to obeying Alexander's decrees. Buddha himself is reported to have said <sup>2</sup>: "Not by hate is hate destroyed. If robbers should saw you limb from limb, he who showed anger would be departing from my way. If you are attacked with fists, stones, sticks and swords, you must preserve a loving mind, with no resentment." Ever since the days, probably nearly five hundred years before Christ, when these remarkable teachings were uttered, there have been many instances of Satyagraha, most of them in individual cases. Perhaps the best-known case of this on a large scale is the self-immolation of the Theban legion under St. Maurice. Rather than engage in a campaign they believed to be wrong, they all killed one another. They could not disobey Cæsar, to whom they had sworn allegiance, nor could they disobey Christ, whose will they

<sup>1</sup> Lit. the taking hold of truth, generally used to signify the submission to violence without retaliation, and sometimes translated as "non-violence."

<sup>2</sup> Dahlke, *Buddhist Essays*.

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believed was against the campaign. Death was preferred to disobedience.

But remembering the martyrs of all the ages, we must skip over the centuries and come to India and to Mr. Gandhi for another mass-demonstration of Satyagraha. The causes of unrest in the mind of Gandhi and of the Indian National Congress were, first, the general contrast between the poverty of the Indian villagers<sup>1</sup> and the amount of money spent on such things as the Viceroy (who costs some £100,000 a year) and the Indian Army.

Second, there are the manifest evils of Industrialism, foisted by the West on to the age-long agricultural civilization of India. In Bombay, 97 per cent. of industrial workers live in single-room tenements, and have an infantile mortality of 828 per thousand.<sup>2</sup> Add to this fact the other evils of crowded city life, and, if you have a conscience, you will find yourself in agreement with Mr. Gandhi.

Third, there is the contrast between these two following points of view. In 1861, Sir Herbert Edwardes said: "England should set before her the noble policy of first fitting India for freedom and then setting her free." A characteristic British politician's utterance of modern times is: "India should be maintained as a permanent possession to find fresh markets for our goods, and employment for our boys." This latter, which is by no means an isolated opinion, but which is firmly held by many Britons, is enough to rankle in any Indian's breast.

Fourth, the Rowlatt Act, giving increased power to magistrates in India in dealing with seditious and similar persons, was passed at an unfortunate time, and was taken by many Indians as a deliberate insult.

Personally, I take no part in politics, nor do I believe that it is right for a missionary to do so. I have never expressed political opinions in any public address I have

<sup>1</sup> The average income in India is £6 to £8 per annum. (Simon Commission Report.)

<sup>2</sup> J. S. Hoyland, *The Cross Moves East*, p. 101.

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given as a missionary. Christ refused to become a political leader and, however strong one's opinions, one must follow Him in this if one is His ambassador. But my own impression is that the cause of distress in India is not so much the British Raj, as the impact of the civilization of the West in general and its industrialism in particular. However, Mr. Gandhi and the Indian Congress are convinced that the villain of the piece is the British Government. He may be completely mistaken in this conclusion, but the fact remains that he has reached it. The Civil Disobedience Campaign was started in 1930. Its aim was to challenge the British Government's authority in India, especially regarding the salt tax, the drink monopoly, and the land taxes. The industrial relationship of West and East was challenged in a boycott of foreign cloth. The remarkable thing about the non-co-operation movement was that it was an opposition to authority of entirely non-violent nature.

The large crowds of Satyagrahis were instructed "to persuade the police, as agents of the Government, to use violence upon them, that they might attain their object of suffering without resistance the worst that the 'oppressor' might do to them." The police found themselves in a difficult position. "Every police charge, ordered under whatever provocation and however cautiously carried out, was still a priceless boon to the movement of Satyagraha, which could only flourish by such 'suffering.' The nationalist leaders are for the most part caste Hindus, and the police are largely recruited from the Moslem and low-caste communities which have accounts to settle with the caste Hindus dating back for many centuries. Considering that the police had to stand up to baiting, at the hands of mobs begging and inciting them to use their *lathis* (sticks) upon them, it is not to be wondered at that occasionally the demand was complied with."<sup>1</sup> Every time that happened, it provided fuel for the press, and could easily be written up as a "police atrocity." On the

<sup>1</sup> Hoyland, *The Cross Moves East*, Allen & Unwin, p. 113.

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other hand, there were real police atrocities from time to time, in bad blood. "When people have watched non-resisters standing up with folded arms and being beaten down with police *lathis*, they are never the same people again, and they feel that in the quarrel it must be the police who are wrong."<sup>1</sup>

The first great success of Satyagraha was that it brought in to support the national cause several kinds of people whom violence would have estranged. At one time, a goodly number of India's most respected and trusted leaders and citizens were in jail. It also brought along the women, who, in India, usually hate a row unless the warfare be merely wordy. Non-co-operation reduced the exports from England to India in one year by over 43 per cent., and this was largely the work of the women, who assiduously picketed shops which sold British goods. The second success of Satyagraha was that it challenged the greatest imperial power in the world, and rendered the job of government exceedingly difficult to an extent which no violent revolution could have done.

Satyagraha bore fruit in the Gandhi-Irwin pact of 1931, and although India has not yet got the Dominion status that many right-minded people hope will soon be hers, the real success and significance of Satyagraha was that it showed to the world the immense superiority, in power as well as in ethics, of the methods of the Sermon on the Mount to all other methods which revolutionaries have used throughout the world's history. "Nothing," said Mr. Gandhi, "can stand before the march of a peaceful, orderly, and God-fearing people." He was right. Gandhi has shown the world that the method of the Cross can be made a working policy in our realistic, materially-minded modern world. I believe it to be the only working policy, and if only Europe can come to follow the splendid men who are trying to lead her along this path at the present time, it may not yet be too late to save the nations from

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.



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the bloodshed and misery into which they are heedlessly and suicidally plunging. The way of the Cross is the only sure foundation for world peace, and perhaps it is India that is going to teach us this.

In consideration of the original premises on which the non-co-operation movement was started, it must be remembered in fairness to the British Government that the condition of the Indian peasant is vastly better now than it was one hundred and fifty years ago. Poverty does certainly exist all over the country, a very terrible poverty amounting in some areas to extreme destitution and to the semi-starvation of millions of people. Nevertheless, the Pax Britannica has put an end to the lawlessness and marauding which were common, especially in North India, at the time when Warren Hastings established good government in India for the first time. In 1772 "the country-folk are at the mercy of bannias (money-lenders) who can only be described as devils; the courts of justice are a by-word; the country is ravaged by bands of dacoits and brigands, and armies of marauders figuring as religious devotees (Sannyasis) range over the province in their thousands." . . . "The Sannyasis rove continually from place to place, recruiting their numbers with the healthiest children they can steal in the countries through which they pass." Bands of them, several thousand strong, ravaged the northern parts of India, especially Bengal, and "committed terrible depredations."<sup>1</sup> All this, and much more, was replaced by the peace and quietness and organized justice for which the British Government was responsible, and which it has preserved all over India during the last hundred and fifty years. This has got to be set against the four complaints of the Indian National Congress just referred to.

After all, patriotism and nationalist feeling is an emotional, not a rational thing. "We don't want *good* govern-

<sup>1</sup> Quotations from Warren Hastings's letters, 1772 and 1773. See V. A. Smith, *Oxford History of India*, 1923, pp. 510 ff.

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ment ; we want *self-government* " is often said, and has been said to me by responsible and thoughtful Indians. If we Britishers had, in giving to India the very great and real blessing of good government, done so with more sympathy and imagination, with more friendship and less superiority, the friendly spirit would have done more than all the arguments in the world to gain the trust and the co-operation of India in political matters. But India feels deeply that we have been efficient without being friendly. If we feel that it is right that Britain should dominate India we rush to argument and reason, forgetting that reason will always fail to sway emotion. The only sound way in which to appeal to any nationalist or patriot, British or Indian, is to offer him an emotional appeal that is even stronger than his love of country. The appeal to fear is the one we see, unfortunately, most often used. The appeal to love—which casts out fear, and is the strongest of all emotions—is the only legitimate one likely either to obtain or to merit ultimate success.

Which way the appeal to love will lead us in Indian politics remains to be seen. It has not yet been tried, but Mr. Gandhi has been nearer to it than anyone on the British side, except perhaps Lord Irwin. If it is not tried in the very near future, God help both India and Britain.

## CHAPTER XXXI

### SERVANTS OF INDIA

ONE OF THE TRAGI-COMEDIES A MISSIONARY HAS GOT TO FACE is the almost universal way in which an Indian is apt to mistake what is British for what is Christian.

It is in accordance with the trait already mentioned that leads him to confuse the shadow with the substance, the spurious with the genuine. As an instance of its amusing side, I remember an engine-driver on the Madras railway who became a Christian. Thinking in the characteristic Indian way that if a thing is English it must be Christian, he applied this misconception to naming his son, for whom he was anxious to provide a Christian name. This little boy was duly called by one of the few bits of English that his father knew, and now rejoices in the name of "Engine Oil."

In the same way Indian Christians are suspicious of many Indian things as being Hindu and therefore heathen. I have been trying for ten years to introduce Indian music and musical instruments into the church at Neyyoor. The late pastor wouldn't hear of it. The Nagaswaram, or Indian clarinet, is a very beautiful and striking instrument, and the Mridangam, or drum, of which mention is made elsewhere, is, in skilled hands, a marvellous maker of rhythm. But these two instruments are used—very effectively, too—in Hindu temple services. "Therefore they are not Christian," said the pastor. It is sad that the services of the Christian Church, already over-Westernized in our part of India, are still further divorced from Indian ways by this unreal attitude of mind.

More of a tragedy is the confusion between real and

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nominal Christianity, which leads Indians so often to blame Christianity for the Great War, for industrialism, and to mix up such things as the Hollywood cinema films of violent crime and equally crude sex relations with the religion of Jesus. There is no doubt that this type of cinema film has done a lot of harm to the good name of Britain and indirectly to the influence of Christianity in India. It is easy to say that the evils that the West has introduced into the East are those which exist in spite of Christianity and not because of it. It is, nevertheless, unfortunately true that there are countless numbers in India, and others, too, in Africa and China, who reject all thought of Christianity because it is associated in their minds with the evils of industrialism and the violence of military domination. Yet it is precisely because the Western Churches have failed to make a bold fight against these things that I have ventured the opinion that we of the materialistic West are waiting for the revelation of our religion that a Christian India can so effectively give us. It is, of course, the searching and all-comprehending demands of Christ, the depth of a true discipleship, which is responsible for the very fact that there is such a thing as nominal as opposed to real Christianity. Practically all the other great religions depend so much on observances, and so little on character, that to talk of a "nominal Hindu," for instance, or a "nominal Buddhist," means very little. But Christ demands the allegiance of the whole life and thought of a disciple; forms and ritual have little to do with this demand. Thus it is that there are broadly two kinds of Christians—those who try to think and to live by Christ's standards, and those who merely go to church, or bear a Christian name, or belong to a Christian community.

There are not a few missionaries in India whose religion is a stumbling-block to the Indian and a hindrance to the Kingdom of God. In Travancore we see some of these, earnestly, and no doubt sincerely, preaching a narrow doctrine which is said to ensure salvation only if certain beliefs

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are rigidly held. Some of these work almost entirely amongst Indian Christians, whom they find easier to pervert into their own narrow little faith than they do to convert the Hindu or the animist. One of the biggest tragedies in mission life in India is this unChristlike thing. I have come across missionaries who are firmly convinced that all sects save their own are going to hell. The intelligent Hindu is bewildered at the number of watertight compartments in the Christian vessel, each inhabited by a little sect who believe that they alone are sailing for the Heavenly City. What have these things to do with Christ? In most cases, absolutely nothing at all. Christ came to start men and women on a new kind of life in which friendship and co-operation with God are conditioned by surrender and whole-hearted devotion on the side of man. Some of us have surrounded this gloriously simple yet searching life with all the appurtenances of religion as man has invented them through the centuries. We carry these appurtenances to India—Church organizations and denominations based on those of the West, regardless of their suitability to the East. We carry the dogmas and creeds with which we have surrounded Christ, and a great deal of which were better left behind. And then we wonder why, after all, it seems that Mr. Gandhi and some of the Hindu sages are far more Christian in many things than we are ourselves.

All the same, it must be remembered that throughout the last century missions have done a tremendous lot for India's betterment and happiness. Hospitals were started in India by missions before the Governments thought of them. In almost every part, also, the Missionary Societies have been the pioneers of education. Indian women are just beginning to come to their rightful heritage of education and emancipation—and missions were in the forefront of this movement. In nearly every case in which social or educative work is being done by the State, it was only after Christian missions had started this work that Governments took it up. A Hindu who has recently travelled all

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over India told me on his return that *all* the good things he had seen in the country were traceable to Christianity. This no doubt was a hyperbole, but struck me deeply, as indeed his own observations had struck him. More than all this, the missionaries, with all their faults and deficiencies, have brought Christ, and the Bible that tells of Him. The influence of Christ in India is very great to-day. It colours a great deal of modern Indian thought and is responsible for the desire for social equality and betterment wherever it exists. All this, and more, is due to missionaries in India. But, in two ways, the very people who have done, and are doing, all this good are apt very often to undo it.

First, there is the way already mentioned in which some missionaries have obscured Christ either by narrow dogma, by denominations and sectarianism, or in general by introducing to the East the non-essential accessories of our Western religion. Second, there is the fact that missionaries while in India are sometimes apt to domineer and interfere and put the Indians right, becoming in the process identified with the "dominant race" which, to the Indian, seems—as indeed it is—to be so antagonistic to the spirit of Christ. This type of missionary is very apt when at home to paint India in the darkest colours, neglecting the better side of Indian life and thought. This naturally offends the Indians, especially as it is usually exaggerated and misrepresented in the newspaper reports of his addresses. Tagore says: "We honour the beauty of the character of Christ, and we admire His teaching, but we feel indignant when His followers go back to the West and openly misrepresent us. That is not Christlike."

Tagore is right. The Indian should never be misrepresented, though it is very hard to strike the balance in a missionary address. We are out as servants of Christ to fight evil, and in addressing those who have sent us out we have got to mention that evil. It would be unfair to India not to mention it, for we believe that India needs

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Christ to free her from it, and it is no use pretending that it doesn't exist. But, in mentioning it, we must emphasize that it is only one side of the picture. The thousand and one attractive and jolly things in Indian family life, and the many spiritual truths in the better side of Indian thought, must be given their due place. And we should not neglect to realize our own shortcomings, the unfriendly attitude of so many of our fellow-countrymen, and the racial feeling which some of us have not yet surrendered to the world-wide love of God. We must remember that we of the West come from nations which have not yet let Christ have His way in our politics, nor in our international relationships. We must bear in mind that there are Indians who firmly hold that "the World War destroyed all India's respect for the Christian West. When Christian brothers killed one another and Christian sisters sang hymns of hate, we said to ourselves that the West hadn't even begun to understand what Christ taught." It is up to us missionaries to give a fair picture of the country we work in, not glossing over the evils, but not, on the other hand, neglecting the good. It must be done with a knowledge of our own shortcomings and of the faults of our own nation, and it is in this spirit, I hope, that the present book has been written. I have attempted to give a sketchy but fair picture of India as I have found it—India as I love it—India, for whose sake I have been happy and privileged to spend the best years of my life.

Finally, a word about our work in Neyyoor as a Medical Mission. What are we out for? What is the best and biggest contribution to India's happiness and India's good that we can give?

Primarily, the work of a hospital is to relieve suffering. Neyyoor and its branches are dealing each year with over 150,000 patients, and relieving more especially their surgical conditions by doing over 3,000 major and 10,000 minor operations every year. Nobody can have read these pages without realizing the need that exists for this work, and for

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far more of the same kind. But, though it is a great thing to be able to relieve all this disease and pain, yet that alone is not enough.

A medical mission is part of the machine, defective in some parts but efficient in others, whose purpose is to bring the Love of God to India. In Travancore there is a large Indian Church—nearly one-third of the population of this State are nominally Christians. There are many pastors and others preaching the Gospel in one form or another. For those who are interested there are plenty of opportunities of hearing some aspect of Christian faith. But, as in all countries—and in most churches—practice is apt to fall far behind. Christ came to start a life rather than a religion, and the supreme characteristic of that life was love. Love, in all relationships, personal, social, national—that is Christ's way.

Though there have been, and are, many saintly and devoted souls in the Indian Church, yet it is quite possible to talk about the way of Christ in the pulpit or on the roadside without interpreting it very well in life and practice. Moreover, theoretical religion comes almost too easily to the Indian, who is always so ready to discuss it.

I remember watching a devil-dance near a little Hindu temple in a small village one night. Several of the lads of the village were sitting around me on the ground. After I had been there twenty minutes or so, one of them said to me in the most natural way: "Sir, will you not give us a sermon?"

"What about?" I replied.

"Oh, about God and Christ. We want to hear about them."

Only too ready to *hear*. But when it comes to life and practice, it is a different story.

The essential work of a medical mission such as ours is therefore to give a practical interpretation of the Love of God to the people of the country. For this purpose, we have got to keep before us several Great Principles.



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First: our work is God's work, therefore it must be as good as we can make it. It must be up-to-date and efficient; it must be ungrudgingly and, as far as possible, untiringly given.

In the second place, as believers in the Fatherhood of God, we must practise the brotherhood of man. All our patients must be treated alike, urgency of condition alone giving a right to preferential treatment. Rich or poor, high or low born, the wealthy man who pays a substantial fee towards the hospital's support, or the destitute untouchable who is fed and treated free in the hospital—all must be given equally of our best, for all are equal in the sight of God.

Third: it has already been seen that a great deal of even the finest devotion of Hinduism is self-centred. It bears something of the spirit of the so-called Christian who sings, "Oh, that will be glory for me," without bothering about whether it will be glory for his neighbour. To this self-centredness—which may very easily become selfishness—it is part of our work to interpret the joy and value of self-sacrifice. I have already hinted at the good spirit of our staff, many of whom are doing their work with a spirit of service which is a witness to their love of God and makes a great impression on the patients.

Further, we must try in our work and methods to follow the Master for whose sake we are doing it. Just as He loved His patients and "had compassion" on them, so our ideal is to show a true sympathy, which can only be done by having in our heart a real deep love for mankind.

It is far harder to do all this than to preach the gospel and hold meetings. It requires a self-discipline and a quality of life to which none of us attains and which we constantly feel to be very far from the ideal we have set before us. But if we treat our patients as our friends, and do what we can for them in such a way as to interpret the love of God, we can be certain that we are giving India the best that it is possible to give her.

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It all comes to this. It is easy to speak—harder to act ; but hardest of all to be. It is what we *are* that counts. It is *ourselves* that we must give to India, in a service which is humble, ungrudging, and loving. And if we can be India's friends and servants, we shall be hastening the dawning of that brighter day when all nations become one human Brotherhood ; the coming of the Kingdom of God.



## APPENDIX

### TECHNICAL MEDICAL AND SURGICAL ASPECTS OF THE WORK AT NEYYOOR

MEDICAL MEN, AND OTHERS WHO UNDERSTAND SUCH THINGS, may be interested to read this short account of our work in India from the surgical point of view.

DUODENAL ULCER is 600 times as common in Travancore as in the North-West of India. Some years of research conducted at Neyyoor has led us to the conclusion that the main cause of duodenal ulcer in Travancore is a deficiency of vitamin (especially A) in the diet.

Duodenal ulcer is almost always treated surgically at Neyyoor. Dietetic and drug treatment is wellnigh impossible in a community of villagers whose staple food is curry and rice, and to whom the idea of a diet is completely foreign, and in many cases it is impossible of attainment for economic reasons. After performing gastrojejunostomy for some years as our routine treatment in over 2,000 cases, we are gradually reserving that operation for those cases who show low acidity or definite pyloric stenosis. We now consider gastrectomy, after the technique of Finsterer, to be the operation of choice for all cases with a high acidity and in whom the pylorus is not stenosed.

In the last few years our mortality in high gastrectomy operations has been less than 2.5 per cent., and the results of the operation from the patient's point of view are far more satisfactory than those of gastrojejunostomy. We usually leave the ulcer and a small portion of the pyloric end of the stomach; the operation is thus rendered simpler and safer than if the ulcer be removed, and the ulcer itself heals well and quickly if this method be employed. Nearly all our abdominal operations are done under spinal (1 in 1,500 percaïn) anæsthesia.

We have had seventy-two cases of GASTROJEJUNAL ULCER

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in the last ten years, but only one of these occurred after a primary gastrectomy operation. For this condition, also, high gastrectomy is the operation of choice, though when it is performed for gastrojejunal ulcer the mortality is much higher than in simple duodenal ulcer—6 to 8 per cent. However, as no other operation for gastrojejunal ulcer does any good, high gastrectomy, whatever its mortality, has got to be done.

In the last six years, 2,500 operations have been performed at Neyyoor for EPITHELIOMA OF THE MOUTH. This cancer of the mouth is due to the chewing of betel-leaf, areca nut, lime, and tobacco, a mixture of which is chewed by nearly everyone over great areas of India. My colleague, Dr. Orr, has discovered that the epithelioma we see so constantly—over 500 cases every year—is due to the use of certain kinds of tobacco with the betel-nut, other kinds being apparently innocuous. The growth usually starts in the cheek, or outer alveolar margin, on the side where the chewer habitually “parks” his betel-nut. Thence it may spread to the upper or lower jaw, and to glands in the neck, especially in the submaxillary region. If the cases are seen early enough, our treatment consists in the insertion of radium needles when soft parts only are involved. If the upper or lower jaws are already attacked, we perform a radical excision of the jaw in question, and in these cases we get very good results. If we can keep the patient under observation satisfactorily, radium insertion produces excellent results too, but only if the patient at once reports any recurrence, however small. I know many Travancoreans now healthy and happy after radium insertions at Neyyoor. The last day before I left India in 1935 an old man came to see me who had had radium in 1931 for a cancer of the lip, glands being removed by operation. The growth recurred on the tongue in two places six months later; both these were attacked with radium, and now, after five years, he has no recurrence. If given in adequate dosage and to adequate extent, and combined with radical operation on the glands, the use of radium in cancer of the cheek is very satisfactory. In the tongue, results are not so good; many of our tongue cases are far advanced, and apt to get secondaries by inhalation in the lungs. The gland problem in epithelioma of the tongue is also much more serious than in cases of cheek or jaw.

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Other varieties of MALIGNANT DISEASE are present in much the same proportions as we see them in Britain, the commonest by far being carcinoma of the cervix. For this, if treatable, we usually use radium. In almost all cases we do a preliminary laparotomy with excision of the presacral (hypogastric) nerves.<sup>1</sup> Cancer of the intestine is rare, tuberculous disease of the cæcum being ten times as frequent in South India as carcinoma of that portion of the gut. Most of our large resections of the intestine are for tubercular conditions.

The INJURIES, especially to limbs, spine, and skull, which we meet with as a result of falls from trees, are treated in much the same way as at the larger hospitals in Britain. Our tendency is more and more to treat fractures with fixation on the lines indicated by Böhler; we often used to wire or plate even septic compound fractures (for the sake of fixation), before Böhler in recent years showed that equally good immobility can be obtained by plaster and pins, and without the introduction of foreign bodies at the site of fracture.

Acute OSTEOMYELITIS is common in children, and when treated by the village medicine-men no doubt many cases perish; but in a good few the disease becomes chronic, and radical sequestrectomy is often called for. Our open-air hospital allows us to treat many of these cases by Wynneth-Orr's method—but in our hot climate it is difficult to keep bed-bugs from getting under the plasters and causing unbearable irritation.

Neglect and maltreatment by the village unqualified practitioners cause, as may be imagined, the average of our cases to be far worse than one sees at home. Tumours are sometimes allowed to grow to colossal size. I once removed an ovarian cyst weighing 112 lb. from a woman who weighed only 88 lb. after the operation was finished. She has been very fit ever since.

On one occasion I removed an ovarian cyst from a woman who was in one of our private wards. A few days afterwards, I heard the very devil of a row proceeding from her ward. Going in to see what was the matter, I found her family practitioner (a qualified man, then in Government service, I regret to say) cursing and swearing at her and her husband for having come in to Neyyoor. This doctor had been giving her daily injections, at five rupees a time, for

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 225-6 for a case of this kind.

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many weeks, and by removing the cyst we had put an end to his substantial source of income. It isn't always the unqualified doctor from whom we have to rescue patients.

As far as medical conditions—as opposed to surgical—are concerned, we find ourselves much more in the domain of Tropical Disease. Typhoid and dysentery (both amoebic and bacillary) are ever with us; nephritis, pneumonia, and acute rheumatism are among the commoner complaints in India just as they are in Britain. The sequelæ of bacillary dysentery are complicated; many cases of ascites which we used to put down to cirrhosis are doubtless due to a chronic peritonitis after bacillary dysentery. Sprue is another obscure disease which often shows itself as a complication of the same infection; in fact, much research is needed on the sequelæ of the dysenteries. For this and other research Neyyoor offers a wealth of material; the tragedy is that we are so overworked with our three thousand major operations in the year, as well as all the other things to do, that we have hardly any time for research. We are always hoping that a time will come when some medical research council will send us somebody to help us in this. The material, in the form of patients, is there; thousands and thousands of others in South India are waiting until something can be found out about the diseases from which they are suffering.

But the stress of work prevents us from really settling down to it and investigating those problems as they should be investigated. We hope that as the financial situation improves the Government of India may give us a grant for research; but the difficulty of finding time to do it remains. The ordinary work of the hospital often takes thirteen hours a day as it is. But while the immediate need of our patients is there in such overwhelming quantity, the urgent business is always to relieve their suffering. We feel that it would be wrong to send sufferers away unrelieved in order to give ourselves more time for the investigation of disease. In truth, we are always up against the fact, already stressed, that there are so few qualified doctors in India compared with the work there is for them to do. Many a young doctor, if he only realized the tremendous opportunities for service offered by a properly-run medical mission, would think twice before settling down to practise in an over-doctored England.

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